



This article is from the NHS website and demonstrates one area where posture can be paramount! 4D Personal Trainers use elements of many techniques to create a systematic, measurable improvement in posture and biomechanics:-

Vicky Joseph's back pain started while she was on a training walk, preparing for a trekking holiday in Nepal.

The pain got so severe that she became depressed and had to leave her job.

She spent years searching for a cure for the pain. She consulted specialists up and down the country and abroad, from orthopaedic surgeons to faith healers.

Five years and more than 50 specialists later, Vicky has stopped her search after discovering pilates.

Surgery and physiotherapy helped ease the pain, but taking up pilates is a lifestyle change that helps manage her back pain over the long term.

Vicky, from East Finchley in north London, says she is now nearly back to her old self. “I walked home from my pilates class the other day,” she says. “It’s a two-hour, seven-mile walk. Before pilates, I couldn’t have done anything like that.”

Her pilates instructor identified a problem that no one, including Vicky, had spotted - her poor posture. “I would never have believed that improving your posture could have such an impact on pain,” she says.

Active life

Before the pain started, it seemed unlikely that Vicky would suffer from back pain. She led an active life and was very sporty. Her exercise routine included tennis, running, cycling, windsurfing and skiing.

But in January 2000, on the training walk, pain erupted in her lower back and right leg. She went to see a specialist, who said it would heal on its own.

“I was advised to take it easy,” she says. “To keep active but stay off any intense exercise.”

But the pain gradually got worse and Vicky was unable to go on the trekking trip.

“The pain was constant and often excruciating,” she says. “I couldn’t stand or walk for more than a few minutes. I couldn’t even sit at the dinner table – I had to kneel.”

After a year and a half of pain, Vicky was feeling suicidal and ended up in a psychiatric hospital. She took six months' sick leave from work.

But when she finally returned to work at the Movement for Reform Judaism, she resigned after a few months. “I just couldn’t manage it physically or emotionally,” she says.

She devoted her time to searching for a cure for her back pain. “I was on a mission to find out what was causing this problem,” she says. “I was seeing a different therapist every few weeks.”

Never give up

But she never got a satisfactory answer. “The cause of the pain was never properly diagnosed,” she says.

The many different reasons that she was given included: “it’s all in the mind”, “it’s trauma from giving birth too quickly”, and “you’ve got one leg shorter than the other”.

To keep her spirits up, she put up a sign at home saying Never Give Up Hope.

Then a breakthrough came. German specialists identified a ruptured disc as the source of the pain and did an artificial disc replacement on Vicky in September 2005.

There was some improvement, but Vicky had been hoping for more. So her search for a cure continued, leading her to “a brilliant physiotherapist and pilates instructor”.

“She was the first person to notice my posture issues,” she says. Looking back, Vicky says the walking injury which sparked the pain was probably the “last straw” after years of poor posture and exercising badly.

She remembers how she used to slump backwards when she was standing, putting pressure on the lower back. She also never gave much thought to how she sat at her desk.

It’s possible that exercising had contributed to her back pain because of poor technique, causing muscle imbalances and weak buttock, back and core abdominal muscles.

Two years of pilates has nearly restored Vicky to her former self. “I’m not one hundred per cent, but I’m getting there,” she says. She now leads an active life and has taken up skiing and cycling again.

For Vicky, back care involves more than just twice-weekly pilates classes. “It’s a life-long commitment to looking after my body,” she says. “I spend around 20 minutes every day doing some stretching. I’m constantly thinking about how I’m sitting, walking or standing. I’m just more careful now about how I use my body.”



You can find the full article at

<http://www.nhs.uk/livewell/backpain/pages/vickyjoseph.aspx>