

Having had the diagnosis of Parkinson's Disease since 1995 (when I was 42) , I decided to retire from my hectic life in 2004 as the prognoses were that I would have a slowly deteriorating physical and mental ability with increased stiffness and reduced dexterity as the years progressed . This proved to be the case so I took up a regime of massage and exercise (mainly stretching). This was helpful but was supported by a lot of drugs to combat the effects of PD (lots of tablets and direct injections of L-Dopa. )

By 2008, I had most of the classic signs of PD, and the need for exercise on a regular basis was obvious. Fortunately, through a mutual friend , I met Andrea and we agreed to have her as a Personal Trainer to provide both the expertise and also the discipline of regular twice weekly sessions of about an hour each. This highly competent, positive and friendly ex-ballerina took on the challenges with her usual empathetic and committed approach .

The effects on the stiffness were immediately apparent and positive. By this stage, in 2010 I decided to have an operation to position two electrodes in the Sub-Thalamic Nuclei deep into the brain. The op was a phenomenal success virtually eliminating all signs of tremor, reducing the stiffness. The number of daily tablets was reduced from something like 27 to 6 per day and the need for direct L-Dopa injections eliminated completely.

Suddenly, I was given a new lease of life : travel was much easier and psychologically as well as physically there was a real reason to be optimistic about the future. Andrea was front and centre in the way forward, designing and optimising a training program for me which was highly personalised and based on a "Whole Body" approach, which was not stuck in a standard set of exercises and machines but was constantly tweaked and modified as Andrea and I worked together.

Life was there to be lived. I had many interests which competed for time, but Andrea and I managed to keep our twice weekly training schedule sacred , fending off many competing bids! The discipline of the program and the physical goals were a key component in our mutual success.

The concept of “re-centering “ which had been pioneered in the UK was an important step and rebalancing the body to ensure that it was fully engaged proved to be a successful tool in not only physically treating a chronic problem, but also in giving ‘hope’ that I think is vital in any training regime. Andrea never gives up and is always very open to trying new approaches which has been a major factor in our fight to conquer chronic lower back pain and to help to correct a stoop and stance to a point where I stand straight again with significantly less pain.

Both psychologically and physically this has been a success. With regular assisted stretching I feel I am well-equipped to keep on top of the PD and to lead the life I want to.

*“No Brain , No Gain, No Pain”*



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