

Clare East's Physiotherapy Patient's Blog **Blog 9 following appointment Monday 9th October 2006**

Well, after the steroid injections I actually felt a lot worse than I thought. Had the op Monday 25th and saw Rachael the next day on the Tuesday, which was a lovely chat and a Reiki healing session with a bit of a massage, she really knows how to treat me well! I took the Wednesday off work too and went back in on the Thursday and Friday. Still didn't feel right but figured that I needed to get myself moving and keep myself active. It was far too much too soon and I hadn't anticipated how much the injections would aggravate the situation, as a result I was trying to plough on as if nothing had happened. By the following Monday lunchtime, a tough morning at school with the kids and a weekend spent not really recovering properly, it finally all came to a head with me breaking down in the Head teacher's office in floods of tears and snots. He advised me to take it easy and not to be so hard on myself. I've decided to take the rest of the week off and rest properly this time!

I was supposed to be seeing Rachael today (3/10) but I really think that some quality time taking care of myself and having a proper rest is what I need, not a mad dash around town just before I got to see Rachael just because I'm heading that way, and then having to lug loads of completely necessary rushed purchases all the way to Ardwick and back!!! This is always what tends to happen....

No, my body has been telling me to take it easy since the op and I just having been listening, well I'm listening now. Rachael had taught me to do this very well I've just forgotten a few of the tricks.

Saw Rachael today instead of last Tuesday and am feeling loads better. Back to work now and I feel much more able to tackle it all. Had a really good chat about my disappointment in the injection not working with Rachael and this has really helped to clear my head. Rachael also told me not to be so hard on myself and as this was the second time someone had said this to me in a week I thought I should explore it further!!

Talking to Rachael and putting all my thoughts and feelings into perspective, helped me to see what I needed to do and where I needed to go to help me back on the road to recovery. She gave me a quick reminder of all the little lessons I'd learned about listening to my body and tuning in, which I should be able to put back into practice a lot faster this time. I am going to be much kinder to myself and give myself much more credit this week for how far I've come. I'm quite looking forward to it really, I have done really well getting back to work and carrying on with gentle exercises when I don't always feel like it! Wow there you go, sounds a bit awkward at first, praising yourself but I could definitely get used to it.

Clare East's Physiotherapy Patient's Blog **Blog 10 following appointment Monday 16th October 2006**

Am feeling much more back to my old self and had a great session with Rachael today. She looked at the exercises that I have been doing and my technique to see if any part of the regime needed to be changed. She was really impressed with my level of control and my new found range of movement since starting the exercises. She has helped me to progress myself further with the exercises and it really shows.

Seeing results like this for me and for her is a really useful part of her practice and I always come away from one of those sessions with a bit of a spring in my step (especially as she helped me to stretch out my nerves).

Am just on my way to see Rachael and to be honest, in the last week I haven't been doing my exercises as much as I'd like because I had parent's evening at school and a bit of a mad last week of term with the kids in class. I got back yesterday from a long weekend away visiting my sister in Scotland which was really great mentally. I'm not going to give myself a hard time though because it's half term this week which means a big step up in the exercise regime, going to the gym and going for lots of swims. I think it helps to be honest with myself and Rachael about how much I am managing and it's also healthy to have good weeks and bad weeks.

This coming week is going to be a good one for me, I can tell. Especially as Rachael has given me the tools with the exercises to feel more in control with my pain and use the nerve stretches and exercises as a way to manage my symptoms.

I am seeing the pain consultant next week for a follow up on the steroid injections and to discuss possible ideas on the next steps to take.
Wish me luck.

Clare East's Physiotherapy Patient's Blog **Blog 11 following appointment Tuesday 24th October 2006**

I have had a great week. It really helps not having to go to work. I swear my back wouldn't be half as bad if I could just potter all day and meet people to "do" lunch. That's not very realistic, I know but I've got a happy medium being a teacher and getting all these holidays. Plus I get to have the money to save up and plan exciting trips.

Great session with Rachael (again....) Don't think I've had a bad one yet! Lovely cup of exotic tea on arrival and I've noticed that she always look very professional in her top with the physiotherapy logo. With visiting a practitioner in their own home, there is always the chance that the whole experience can be too informal and that you're not sure if you're getting your moneys worth, if you know what I mean? With the private physio room upstairs and all the appropriate spine models, charts, bed and cushions and her uniform the whole experience is professional but extremely comfortable and makes you feel very at ease.

Rachael brought up some areas that we had previously discussed and I really appreciated that she had been reading over all my previous notes. She manages to retain her client knowledge in such a way that it makes you feel as though you are the only client that she has on her books.

We did a lot of talking (and boy can I talk), in the first part of the session today about my current levels of pain, discomfort and mobility and how I was feeling following my recent op. I've come to realise (with Rachael's help) that my mind is so clearly linked to all my symptoms and needs treatment too. She managed to maintain an objective yet helpful approach to answering my questions and helped me to see what steps I could take next. I nearly cried when she told me that I had the tools to be free from this and although I've always known (or at least hoped), it was great to hear a professional saying it out loud, it felt so invigorating. Like I could tackle the world.

The next part of the session really took me by surprise. Rachael began to mobilise parts of my spine and the areas around it. She asked me about my symptoms as she put pressure on and took it off again. Then she began to manipulate the area around and on the end of my coccyx, this is the centre of my pain as it is the area that was fractured and angulated in the accident. It rarely gets pressure put directly onto it due to where it is and every time it is touched at the end the pain sends me through the roof. The last time was by my pain consultant at the hospital and I tensed up so much I nearly shot across the room and made a strange whimpering sound mmphh.

Rachael began to gently mobilise this extremely painful area and an amazing thing happened. As I tried to relax into the pain, it started to subside and she could use more and more pressure. But even though the pain was beginning to subside the memory of the years of previous pain that appeared to have been locked in those nerves for the past 7 years, all came to a head and I just burst into uncontrollable tears. Because that area is so rarely touched and that exact pain is so rarely felt it is the referred pain that gives me the most trouble. She reassured me that a lot of people react like that which made me feel loads better. I was still stunned and amazed by my reaction!

The following advice on this weeks work was also quite unexpected. Rachael suggested that I gently but increasingly put pressure all around the coccyx area using 2 fingers and some cream. If someone would have asked me to do that 6 months ago I would have winced at the mere thought of it. I've tried it all week and it's beginning to work. The area is becoming de-sensitised and it's helping with my referred pain too. Who'd have thought it eh?

Clare East's Physiotherapy Patient's Blog **Blog 12 following appointment Tuesday 31st October 2006**

Well I haven't been to see Rachael for a few weeks. Have had a bit of a tough time in my personal life and this has meant that all thoughts of my own recovery have been put on hold. A little boy from my school was killed on his way to school. He was hit by a car on a crossing. This really affected everyone at school. Then two days later my husband's grandmother died unexpectedly in the night which he was really affected by. Two days after that, we got a call to say that OFSTED were coming to inspect the school. For anyone who works in education you will know the stresses and strains that this brings. Talk about pressure! So, I have had two very sad funerals and an OFSTED inspection, all in the same week. Have had to cancel my next appointment with Rachael but will go and see her next week when I'm feeling more up to it. Will probably have to insist on a full body massage after all this trauma.

The last session I had with Rachael was also quite emotionally draining as we discovered that the problems may lie with my pelvic floor muscles. To cut a long story short and save me the embarrassment, the pelvic floor stops you from wetting yourself a bit when you laugh or sneeze and mines not working too well! Rachael had been on an amazing course which flagged up some of the problems that I present and together we are going to get the old pelvic floor checked out. This could explain that heavy drawing pain that I experience and just can't seem to shift.

I think this will be my last blog but Rachael will keep you posted on my progress on the website I'm sure. Will see how we go at the pain clinic and fanny doctor next month hee hee! What doesn't kill ya can only make you stronger eh? Thanks for the experience of being able to write my journey.