

Case study

Jenny Lake

A member of the Society, Jenny Lake, told us how speaking to one of the Society's keen activists has led to a better life...

"I went into shock when I was first diagnosed. I could not see a way forward but over time I found there was one. At last, I have a normal life again and am happy. I had the usual problem encountered by dystonia patients of not getting diagnosed correctly. I finally saw the neurologist at Derriford Hospital, Exeter, and he confirmed I had dystonia.

I finally joined the Dystonia Society and the helpline proved to be a lifeline. They put me in touch with Nicky Parkin, one of the Society's keen activists who had to abandon her career because of dystonia. Like me, Nicky has cervical dystonia and she became very much a lifeline for me when I occasionally felt a bit down.

My injections helped immediately. I had lost my co-ordination and I couldn't cut my food. But, within a week, my dexterity had returned and I could cut up my food again and drink without a straw.

However, I still spent many hours lying on the sofa to stop my neck aching. My eyes also ached as well because my head was so twisted. I walked my lovely labrador Poppy every day to keep the rest of my body fit. I was completely focussed on wanting to get better, pushing myself.

In 2008 I got the all clear after a year to get back to driving. My husband found me a small automatic car, although it took some time before I got my confidence. The first time I went shopping it was quite nerve-wracking, I thought I'd never get back home, but I kept on going a little further each time.

My neck still ached a lot but Nicky recommended shiatsu. I decided to give it a try so I met Angie Jones. I liked her very much and she began the long job of getting my neck and shoulders back in shape. Today I have more movement than I've had for a long time. I fought and fought and have come out the other side a better happier person!"



● Jenny Lake