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The number of articulating vertebrae that usually make up the human spine.



STRIKE A POSE: Catherine Beetham is preparing dance routines for shows taking place this summer

Teen is back dancing after spinal therapy

By STEVEN BELL

A YOUNG dancer from Beetham faced with a complex operation to treat a dangerous back condition is on the mend after finding alternative treatment.

Four years ago, Catherine Davis, 15, was diagnosed with scoliosis which causes the spine to curve excessively sideways. Fatal heart and lung problems can result if it is left untreated and sufferers usually have to endure nine-hour spinal fusion surgery to recover.

Fusion surgery involves the insertion of metal rods either side of the spine before it fuses solid.

Following appointments with specialists and orthopaedic consultants, Catherine was told the only way of treating her condition was by having the operation.

But Catherine's mother, Maggie, was determined her daughter would avoid the risky procedure and set about doing her own research.

Despite being told Catherine's condition could not be treated with physiotherapy, Mrs Davis came across a specialist clinic called Scoliosis SOS, based in Suffolk.

After meeting with clinicians, she arranged for Catherine to undergo an intensive course of specialist therapy using a combination of non-surgical treatments known as the ScolioGold method.

And after completing the month-long course, Catherine's condition stabilised. She also made signif-



ON THE MEND: Catherine says she feels she has some control back following the therapy for scoliosis

icant improvements in her posture, physical appearance and lung capacity.

With a new spring in her step, the brave teenager returned home to South Lakeland and is now preparing dance routines for summer shows.

Catherine said: "When I was told I had scoliosis, my whole world fell down around me.

"I lost so much confidence and I thought my only option was to undergo major surgery.

"I can remember thinking that I just wanted the nightmare to be over. That was when mum told me about the SOS clinic.

"I didn't even stop to think that it might not work - I just saw it as my ticket out of having surgery."

For Catherine, the change has been dramatic. She said: "My life has completely changed. I feel like I have some control back."

The keen ballet dancer is now able to practice with friends at

dance school without feeling exhausted after a few minutes.

Catherine wants more sufferers to be aware of the ScolioGold method. She said: "I wish that surgeons would recommend this treatment to their patients as so many young children could do these exercises rather than having dangerous surgery."

Mrs Davis said: "Catherine has come such a long way during the past few months. She has changed from a child into a young lady.

"If it wasn't for the clinic she would not have regained her confidence and she would still be facing major spinal fusion surgery."

Scoliosis SOS was founded five years ago by Erika Maude who has the condition. It is the only clinic in the world to offer such treatment and has brought relief to hundreds of people.

More than four per cent of people in Britain have scoliosis.