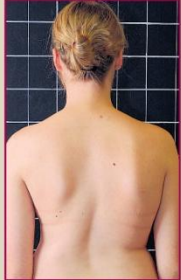


Health & wellbeing

Taking back control when all hope is lost



BACK TO BASICS: Terrie-Marie Scoots, who was diagnosed with scoliosis



POSTURE: Terrie-Marie, before, above, and after treatment



WHEN 13-year-old Terrie-Marie Scoots started to notice a few painful twinges in her shoulder she simply put it down to a sporting injury. After all, she was throwing herself headlong into lots of energetic school activities and enjoying spending her free time as a member of the RAF Air Cadets.

It wasn't until her mother, Kirsty, noticed something irregular about the shape of her daughter's back, that the pair set out on the long road to the diagnosis three-years-later which Terrie-Marie admitted "scared the hell" out of her.

At the age of 16, Terrie-Marie was told she had scoliosis, a painful and debilitating condition which causes the spine to slowly curve sideways. Now, aged 18 and following treatment at a pioneering clinic, she says she is still hoping to realise her dream of joining the RAF.

Terrie-Marie, from Holme-on-Spalding Moor, said: "When I first found out all about it I was on a downward spiral. I wanted to go into the RAF and I was told I had no chance. I was also in a lot of pain and I had no self-confidence."

After visiting her GP, Terrie-Marie was first told there was nothing to worry about and to continue living life as normal. However, her mother, who was studying for a degree in nursing at the time, knew that there was



by **RICHARD CATTON**
Health Reporter

richard.catton@thepress.co.uk

something not quite right. She started to do her own research and after several hours of reading she became sure that her daughter's symptoms were related to scoliosis.

The pair returned to the GP armed with reams of information on the deforming condition. After a long discussion the GP agreed she may have a curve in her spine and referred her for an X-ray.

"I was told my spine would move one or two degrees every year, which was horrible," she said. "I couldn't see a way out of it."

Meanwhile, the family faced an agonising wait to see an orthopaedic surgeon in Leeds with a view to having back surgery. This was Terrie-Marie's darkest time and saw her slip in to depression as the pain grew worse and she was unable to join in with the activities she loved at school.

It was during this time, however, that the family were told about the Scoliosis SOS clinic.

Founded and run by Erika Maude, who has scoliosis herself, the clinic opened just under five years ago and claims to be the



COURSE: Exercising in the Scoliosis SOS clinic

only place in the world to offer treatment following a method known as ScolioGold - a combination of non-surgical treatments which have been practiced in Europe for several decades.

Terrie-Marie said the four-week course of treatment was invaluable in giving her back her life and introducing her to others of a similar age who suffered from the condition.

"Being able to ease my pain has been amazing," she said.

"I am now in total control of my body; I know what's good for my back and what's not."

"I'm a lot more confident now and have a lot of hope for the future."

"I just don't understand why there are so many people out there who are told that there is no treatment other than major spinal fusion surgery."

"Surgery was not right for me and I doubt it is for hundreds of other kids my age."

Now she says she has noticed an improvement in her posture and

physical appearance but, most importantly, she is now reversing the effects of gravity and is completely pain free.

She has learned how to hold her body and how to look after her back.

According to Scoliosis SOS, the condition affects four per cent of the population and, if left untreated, can lead to fatal heart and lung problems.

"Despite this, Terrie Marie said she is surprised at the lack of information, support groups, and knowledge about scoliosis."

"I would like more to be done to make doctors and the public aware of this condition," she said.

"The key is recognising the symptoms early."

"We have since learned the condition can be hereditary, so we are keeping an eye out for my sister now, who is 13."

For more information on the ScolioGold treatment, phone Scoliosis SOS on 0330 440 1808 or visit scoliosissos.com

What is scoliosis?

ACCORDING to the Scoliosis Association UK (SAUK) the condition is "a sideways curvature of the spine, in which the spinal column can also twist, pulling the ribcage out of position".

It is believed that as early as 500 years BC, the Greek physician Hippocrates was writing about it and its unusual name is derived from the Greek word for curvature.

It can affect a person's appearance as when the spine bends to the side the vertebrae become twisted and pull the ribs round with them, which sometimes forms a characteristic lump on the back and can cause the shoulder blade to stick out.

The association said treatment may be compromised if it is not started until the condition is severe. For more information visit sauk.org.uk