



Recovery from ME

Annette reports on how she is recovering from debilitating ME using breathing training delivered by the telephone coaching sessions available from Equine Breathing.

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I suffered from ME for just over 2 years but it felt like a lifetime!

I am lucky that I didn't have severe ME and was never confined to bed for months on end, however I was finding it extremely hard to manage work and look after my young daughter. Sometimes I had to take time off work and ask friends to help me with cooking and the school run as I just couldn't do it. Even taking a shower was like doing a 10k run! I was fearful of losing my job, and worried that I would not be able to provide and care for my daughter. I was sleeping in my lunch hour just so I could get through the day and also found myself in bed most week-ends trying to recover, although I never felt that resting really worked. When I contacted Clare I had been taking sleeping tablets most nights as I just couldn't sleep which was making matters even worse.

The overwhelming symptom for me was the feeling of exhaustion. Initially I also suffered joint pains and muscle aches but at least I could take pain relief for that. I also suffered 'Brain fog' which was very frustrating at times. I had no quality of life and felt embarrassed to mention I had ME. I was also worried about losing friends, as my relationships with them inevitably changed due to not being able to socialise very often and always having to cancel things at the last minute when I wasn't well enough.

You read such awful stories about people never recovering and the medical profession tell you there is no cure so that worried me immensely. Also, being such a driven and active person I found it very hard to cope with the diagnosis and felt such a failure

I heard about using breathing to recover from ME from my sister who met Clare at a Salsa class. Clare mentioned she had recovered from ME by changing her breathing. I hadn't realised that breathing might be relevant to my problem until Clare explained it. Now it all makes so much sense!

Desperation made me decide to try breath training. Also determination to get my life back. I was sick of doctors and other health professionals telling me they could ONLY help me to manage my symptoms.

I hoped that breath training might at least make me become less anxious about my condition, if nothing else that would have been a bonus. I never expected to feel better so soon and to feel I had regained control.

I was not very confident that it would work at all, in fact I was most sceptical. I had heard of so many different approaches such as EFT (Emotional Freedom Technique), The Lightning Process, CBT (Cognitive Behavioural Therapy) etc and I had tried most supplements recommended for ME but none of them had had any effect apart from yoga, which interestingly also involves breath control

When I started the breath training course my immediate aim was just to be able to manage to work, look after my daughter and nothing else. I started to feel improvements almost immediately and I was quite shocked but pleasantly surprised at how soon I could feel the benefits. Now, however I have other aspirations!

It was very easy to do the exercises. Initially it did seem a lot to fit in on top of everything else but soon it became routine.

Nearly everything on the course surprised me! When Clare told me I had to start exercising I didn't know whether to laugh or cry because at that point my joints were so painful that all I wanted to do was stay in bed and take loads of pain killers and sleeping pills. I was seriously questioning the point of my life.

The most memorable parts of the course were my chats with Clare. She was always so positive and supportive. The fact that she has been through something similar was very reassuring. When she says 'I know how you feel' she really does! I couldn't have done it without her support and encouragement.

I still get tired but nowhere as near as exhausted as I was before. I never stay in bed now when I am tired but do the exercises instead and I 'miraculously' seem to pick up. And the big difference is that now when I do feel tired I really believe that it will pass, and it always does. Of course I still have that ME voice in my head saying 'oh God, hope I will not collapse' but I am learning to ignore that voice and concentrate on the times when I have done lots of activities and suffered no ill effects.

I am overjoyed about the improvements! However, still surprised at how something so simple can work (that's the cynic in me!) I have joined a choir, have started to swim regularly and I have also started doing weights to build up my arm strength. I recently went on holiday and cycled, walked and even kayaked on the sea, something I haven't done for years. Even the simple things like being able to go shopping with my daughter have been possible and no dreaded 'crashing' afterwards.

I am enjoying life so much more now and I think the people around me are also seeing the benefits! Having ME knocks your confidence and although it hasn't completely come back I am almost there! It's great to be able to get out and about to socialise and not worry about the effect it will have afterwards. I know I am in control. When I was feeling at my worst I struggled to get through each day and longed to get into bed as early as I could. The week-ends were almost worse than the week days, I dreaded them as I was always too tired to do anything fun with my daughter. At best I managed to take her to the cinema. On week-



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ends when I was alone I spent a lot of time in bed feeling sorry for myself and wondering how much longer I could carry on. Life is much better for both of us now! I actually look forward to the week-ends.

My biggest wish now is to be able to dance Salsa again without experiencing fatigue afterwards. Clare tells me that I will definitely be able to do that! It seemed hard to believe a few months ago but now I think it is becoming more of a reality. After that.... well I would love to be able to go running again one day and maybe I will even feel ready to start a relationship.

If your energy levels are not as good as you would like go to Horse Breather issue's 42 and 43 to see how you can improve your breathing and health.

Details of the ME/Chronic Fatigue telephone Breathing Training course are available on the products and courses page www.equinebreathing.com/products.htm

The contents of this ezine are not a substitute for veterinary advice. If the reader has any concerns they should seek independent professional advice from a vet.