

## Parkinson's – Albert's story

Albert Bursill was 74-years-old when his doctor informed him the reason he dragged his feet when walking was due to the early stages of Parkinson's disease.

"It was scary," he said.

"My licence was taken away, which was devastating really."

The Stanway resident, now 76, was told the degenerative neurological condition had started to develop some years earlier, which, coupled with Albert's pre-existing arthritis in his back, made it difficult for him to walk distances, get himself up and dressed and continue with one of his favourite pastimes – gardening.

Parkinson's affects the body through the deterioration and impairment of brain functions, thought to be caused through a loss of the chemical called dopamine that helps regulate the body's movement.

The cause of the main type of Parkinson's is unknown, however most experts believe that both genetic and environmental factors are involved. Other types of Parkinsonism can be caused by a series of mini strokes, by certain drugs or trauma.

Once diagnosed, Albert was quickly referred to specialist physiotherapist Sophie Stubbings for treatment.

"I was hoping she could help me get better, and it has helped quite a bit," Albert said.

"It's been a great help for my walking."

Albert had 12 sessions of physiotherapy with Sophie, focussing on exercises to improve his mobility, including knee rolling when lying down, bridging and upper body rotations, and tests for balance.

Since completing his sessions, Albert has continued with his exercises at least once, often twice, a day to keep up his mobility.

"I still do the exercises, mostly for my legs and bending my knees."

Most importantly for Albert, his physiotherapy treatment and ongoing exercise regime has meant he can get back in the garden each day

"You mustn't give up, you have to keep persevering," he said.

"I don't want to seize up altogether."

He encouraged other people with Parkinson's to seek advice and treatment from a physiotherapist.

"Oh I would definitely recommend physiotherapy," he said.

"It has helped, quite a bit."

## Post-operative shoulder rehabilitation – Joan’s story

Motivation, determination and a positive mindset have been instrumental to Joan Hill’s recovery from shoulder surgery.

The avid tennis player underwent surgery in 2014 after a series of injuries left her with tears to her muscles and detached cartilage.

“The pain was shocking,” Joan said.

“My shoulder dropped six inches and I couldn’t hold it up.”

After surgery, Joan was told she could expect to recover up to about 80 per cent of her previous mobility at the most, and was referred to senior physiotherapist Chris Greenfield for post-operative shoulder rehab.

“I saw Chris and he said, ‘80 per cent is not good enough, we’re going for 100 per cent’,” Joan said.

“It was inspiring, he is a motivator.”

Coupled with Chris’ encouragement however, was Joan’s own fierce determination to get back on the tennis court.

“From my point of view, if I didn’t put everything in to it, how could I expect to recover,” she said.

“You have to, otherwise you only have yourself to blame.”

Joan’s recovery was slow to begin with, as her right arm was in an immobilising sling, but after six weeks of treatment with Chris, she was moving her fingers and hands.

“He made me think of things to make me push harder and taught me to think outside the box,” Joan said.

Her treatment included using bottles of water as weights to build strength.

Chris, who works at the Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust, said Joan’s improvement was “phenomenal”.

“I saw her through the first six months of rehab, and it’s very rewarding and pleasing to see patients progress,” he said.

“When I caught up with her nine months after her original surgery, it was pretty incredible to see her hitting a ball with the racquet already.”

Joan is still a while off rejoining her midweek competitions but said she was happy to be back on the court, and thanked Chris for his work in getting her there.

“Without the physiotherapy, I just wouldn’t be me,” she said.