

## **My Journey and Yoga with Adult Community Learning**

### Rosie's Story

In November 2005 I was diagnosed with Fibromyalgia (a chronic fatigue and pain syndrome) and sciatica-like trapped nerves in my back. My main symptoms were shooting pains in my legs, a dull ache all over my body, chronic tiredness and unrefreshing sleep. This meant that I had to give up my nurse training and spent over 6 months on crutches, taking up to 22 tablets a day to try and control my pain.

My cousin had been diagnosed with Chronic Fatigue Syndrome earlier that year and we decided that we both wanted to do what gentle exercise we found possible and after some research decided that Yoga would be a good start.

We signed up to Jo's beginner class not really knowing what to expect, but when we arrived we had a warm welcome and long chat with Jo about our medical conditions and she put our minds at ease, telling us to just do what we were capable of. We soon realised during the first lesson that we were not able to do a lot of the postures, but Jo worked with us individually and tailored the postures to meet our capabilities and medical needs.

Over the first year in the beginners class, Rachel and I both thought we improved immensely and could see progression from week to week and term to term. Jo was very good at encouraging us and our progression which really helped. By this time I was able to walk without crutches and my trapped nerves were already drastically improved. After one year of yoga we decided to stay in the beginners class, because we wanted to improve more on the work we had done, by the end of the second year we felt we were ready to progress onto the intermediate class and really enjoyed the new challenge it posed. By this point with the help of yoga I was able to control my pain with only 5 of my original 22 tablets and could see a massive improvement in my physical and mental coping abilities.

I have thoroughly enjoyed the progression of the intermediate class, it has really helped improve my core muscles, without being strenuous like lifting weights at the gym! We are now able to and have completed Race for Life (5km) in a combination of walking and running and I am looking forward to running 10k later this year for Cancer Research! If you had told me 4 years ago that I would be able to do all of these things I would never have believed you.

During our three years at yoga classes we have made a lot of friends who have supported and encouraged us along our journeys, as we have with theirs.

I can honestly say that learning yoga with anyone but Jo would not have been the same, she is a fantastic teacher and always tailors the class to pupil's needs, taking special care with everyone's reactions to postures. I honestly feel that my condition would not have improved as well and as quickly without yoga and Jo!

