

Dear Richard and Hannah,

I'm writing to tell you how glad I am that I decided to give your FlexxiCore Passive Exerciser a trial – so glad in fact that I bought it, so that I can continue to use it. It's been really useful in the rehabilitation of the strained sacro-iliac joint in my right hip.

The way this problem developed is a bit of a long story, but it might be useful for your research. I think I've always had an imbalance in my pelvis – apparently it's very common. The effect is a one-sided bias, which gradually gets worse as the years go by, or sometimes it can be caused by a particular accident, like a fall. I sometimes get patients who have put their S.I. joint out by long periods of gardening! Usual symptoms are back and hip ache, and often discomfort when walking. Exercise like Yoga and Pilates, which stretch both sides evenly, can help to re-balance the body.

For my part, I tried to improve myself through Yoga, Alexander Technique and Martial Arts, including T'ai Chi Chuan. I studied Shiatsu and became a Practitioner – all helped but nothing completely worked; I always felt as if my right leg was slightly contracted up into my hip. Then, in order to help myself as well as my patients, I attended a workshop on pelvic alignment and learned how the sacro-iliac joint, if not properly in position, can warp the pelvis and therefore the whole body. The technique to fix it worked – fantastic! I felt completely different. Because I'd had this condition for so long (I was just over 50), I'd have to keep performing the correction until it stabilised. What I didn't know was that my joints were becoming weak and inflamed as the result of an apparently unrelated problem, severe and deep-seated gum disease which my dentist failed to diagnose. The toxins which this infection created stressed my immune system badly, and I was quite ill for several years – and the hip didn't stabilise. I had to give up virtually all exercise and do everything with extreme caution, so as not to cause the S.I. joint to shift. I had various treatments for it. Once or occasionally twice a week I would have one of the following treatments: Cranial Osteopathy, Bowen Technique, Jin Shin, Acupressure, Shiatsu, Acupuncture, Aromatherapy Massage, and Vortex Healing. I worked very little and dared not garden, or carry heavy weights, and I even had to give up Tai Chi.

Then two things happened which made all the difference. I began to exchange sessions with a very experienced Pilates trainer, and she was able to identify the muscles I was over or under-using, and to teach me how to use them evenly. The second thing was the FlexxiCore Passive Exerciser, which I decided to trial. Because the passive exercise it provides is carried out lying down, and the movement and the speed are controlled, I found it kept the S.I. joint mobile without straining the cartilage which holds it together, and my knee and ankle didn't hurt. My spine wasn't thrown out of line because I was lying flat, and it was loosened and energised by the fish-like wave movement. At the same time that I increased the speed and duration of my sessions on the machine, I was gradually building up the strength and tone (evenly this time!) of my core abdominal and pelvic floor muscles through the Pilates training.

This process is still going on. The FlexxiCore Passive Exerciser together with well supervised Pilates training is an excellent combination for a condition like mine, and I use the machine with my patients as well. It invigorates and relaxes at the same time, like my chosen therapy, Shiatsu. Even five minutes on the exerciser makes a difference, and affects mood as well as physical stress. This year I've been able to garden again and we have home-grown vegetables. I still have to be careful not to overdo it, but I'm so much better now – so thanks!

Terri Goddard (Shiatsu and Acupressure Practitioner)