

Case study 3

Yoga

Angela Schroeder and Nicola



Durham based mum, Nicola, an above the knee amputee of five years really suffered during lockdown. Being such a bubbly, social person that always loved a hug and seeing family, she felt absolutely broken when the rules came into place. Not being able to see anyone or have physical contact was soul destroying. Having lupus also meant she had to shield.

She saw an email regarding the reVAMP programme and she signed up. However, being alone for most of the time and away from many loved ones completely took its toll on Nicola and she struggled with her mental health.

She didn't continue with the programme other than her yoga where possible. That weekly yoga was one of the only things that kept her going. She found that it really helped with her mind.

"I really feel like my yoga hour on a Sunday morning is actually my hour. I don't worry about anyone or anything and I just breathe. I breathe away all the tension that I have been carrying all week, especially with my house move, and I just feel at peace. It is my hour to focus on just me. And the added bonus is that I have formed so many lovely close friendships and I look forward to seeing everyone virtually weekly," said Nicola.

Yoga is something for everyone and it isn't just about making shapes on a mat. It goes deeper and really helps you connect with yourself and your breath.

"There doesn't seem to be anything local to me for amputees and I feel really safe in this environment with others that truly understand how I feel and what I am going through. It is so comforting. You can see how others do things and understand how they cope with their own phantom pains," continued Nicola gratefully, "so it has been so helpful in more ways than one."

Teaching people with limb difference means the instructor has to adapt the



poses and sequences. Yoga works so well for amputees, as yoga instructors in general are constantly adapting poses and techniques depending on their individual student's bodies. Some days we have more flexibility and other days we do not so working with teachers who adapt to your needs really helps us amputees. That's the beauty of yoga and it is all about the flow and actually working with your body and doing what your body is capable of doing at that present moment.

Angela and Michael run the yoga programme for us weekly. Both are also trained complementary therapists so offer a welcoming ear during the sessions. By offering yoga virtually we were able to reach so many more people especially those that were feeling even more isolated during lockdown.

Classes are weekly and there is a very supportive WhatsApp group with members becoming so close they are trying to arrange a meet-up half way across the country when it becomes safer for them all to do so.

Angela, yoga instructor and trustee for LimbPower, said, "The addition of yoga to the reVAMP programme has been fantastic



as it really complements some of the more active sessions within reVAMP. It helps to stretch the body and relax the mind."

"It has been so heart-warming for me to witness these lovely friendships developing and such a warm community forming online. They are all so supportive of one another, keeping each other motivated and we have a very open forum where they all feel they can speak up when needed. It is more therapeutic than just yoga alone. I have learnt so much from them about adapting my techniques to suit others and I have loved every moment. I don't see this ending any time soon."

