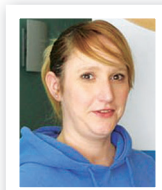


# 'A computer helped cure my back pain'

*Sarah Phelan was living in constant agony, but a new treatment has helped her smile again*



**P**eople often joke they'd like to get out of doing the chores, but after three years of relying on my fiancé, Alan, I'm just happy I can do them again.

When I first felt twinges in my lower back in March 2011, I just thought I'd overworked myself. I'd go on long walks with my children, Lucy, then eight, and Jimmy, four, and to the gym four times a week. But soon, the spasms were getting more frequent and painful.

Two weeks later, I was at the cinema when my back seized up. 'I can't move,' I said frantically to Alan. It was like being gripped in a vice, then released just long enough to catch my breath, before being gripped again.

I went to A&E but, with doctors unconvinced it was serious, I was given morphine and sent home. Things never improved, so I went back and forth to my doctor, who said it was a muscle problem, but I was sure it was my spine.

I'd wake up in the night crying. I had to give up my job in a nursery, and as the shooting pain started to travel down my

left leg, I had to rely on a crutch just to get around. I hated that people might think I was exaggerating. You can't see back pain – it wasn't like a broken leg.

By April 2012, despite being on high doses of painkillers, I could barely remember the last time I'd been able to take the kids out somewhere fun.

It was another 18 months of hell before Mum spotted an advert for IDD Therapy – a non-invasive treatment that gently draws apart spinal segments where discs are damaged or herniated. I was sceptical – it sounded like some medieval torture device – but what did I have to lose?

Two days later, Mum drove me to meet Craig Mortimer, the clinic director and head physiotherapist at The Ashleigh Clinic in Leicester. He explained that I had the classic symptoms of a herniated ('slipped') disc. This hadn't shown up on MRIs because lying down for the scan meant there was no weight bearing down on my discs to push the bulge outwards. The pain was caused by the disc pressing on my sciatic nerve. 'I'm confident IDD can help,' Craig said.

Treatment cost £70 for an hour's session. I signed up for a month and, that day, Craig 'warmed up' my muscles with



heat therapy, put supportive harnesses around my back and pelvis and helped me on to the treatment bed. I felt a nice soothing sensation as a machine gently stretched my back. I was a bit sore, but just three sessions later, the pain was easing and I was walking a lot better.

Since finishing my course, I go back to see Craig once a month for a check-up and, amazingly, life is great again. I can go for family walks and to the gym. And I have a computer to thank for all of it!

**\* To find your nearest IDD Therapy Spine Centre, call 0345 625 2566 or visit [iddtherapy.co.uk](http://iddtherapy.co.uk)**

**'I'd wake up crying and had to quit my job'**

## WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

**A slipped disc** is where one of the discs in the spine ruptures and the gel inside leaks out.

**The sciatic nerve** is often affected by pressure placed on it, which can cause aches, numbness and a tingling sensation in the legs.

**Recovery** can take up to six weeks with physio and medication, but in severe cases, surgery is needed to release the compressed nerve and remove part of the disc.

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### WAYS TO BOOST YOUR HEALTH THIS WEEK

The scientists have spoken! Try these tips for a healthier life



#### Be shady

**Sunglasses** don't just help prevent crow's feet around your eyes, they can also ease allergies by blocking irritating pollen.

A recent study showed sufferers who wore sunnies every day for a month found relief from red, itchy eyes. And you'll look glam, too!

#### Track it!

If you're keen to get in shape, the **Misfit Shine** (£99.95, [Amazon.co.uk](http://Amazon.co.uk)) can help. The tracker helps monitor your food intake, activity levels and even the quality of your sleep.



#### Get fruity

With the hot summer months (hopefully) fast approaching, try **watermelon** as a snack. With a high water content, it's healthy, delicious and a great way to stay hydrated. ☺

