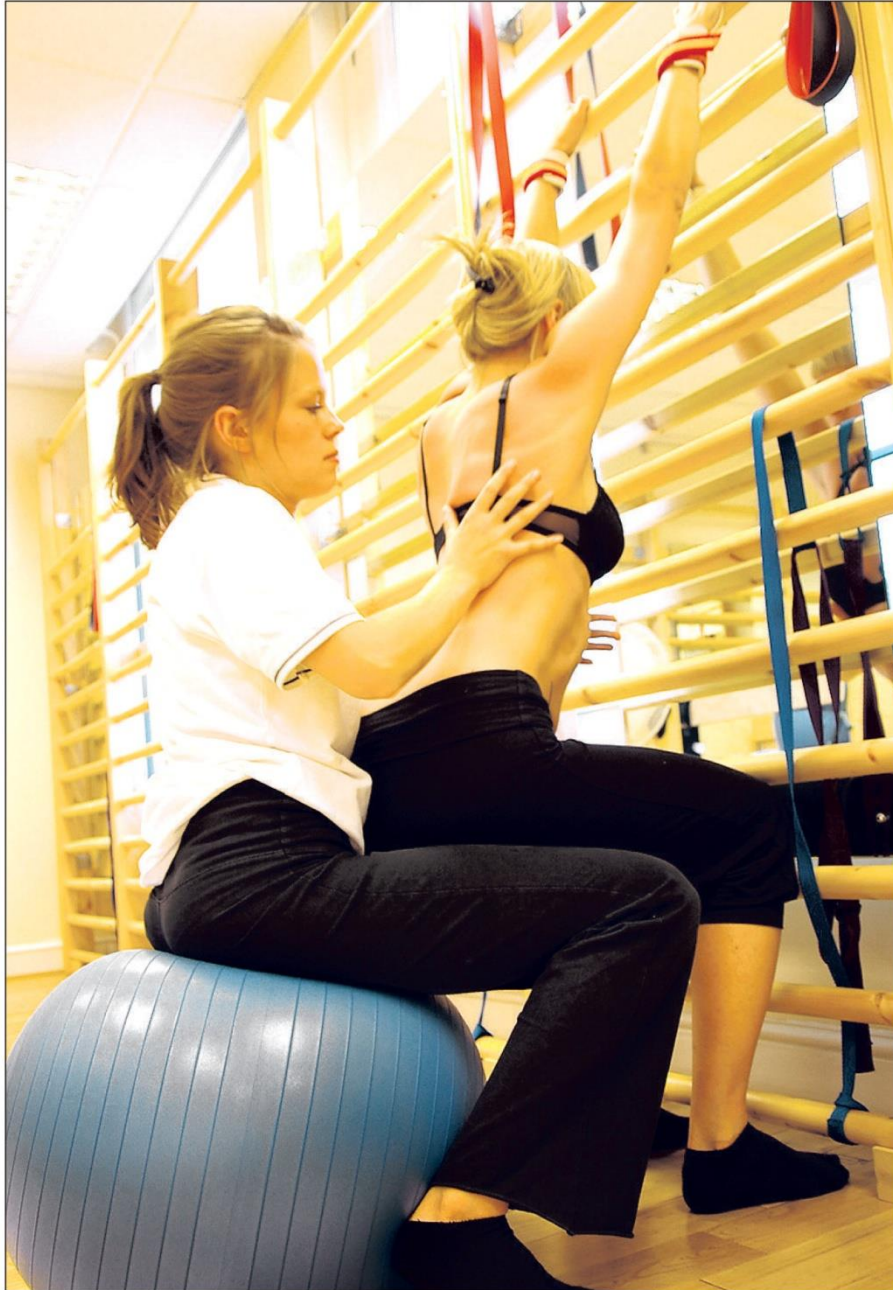


Surgery-free scoliosis help



Tracey Micklewright receiving treatment at the Scoliosis SOS clinic

Pioneering treatment eases teacher's pain

By Tom Johannsen

Pioneering new treatment has helped a Shropshire teacher avoid major spinal surgery to alleviate excruciating back pain.

Tracey Micklewright, from Welshampton, near Ellesmere, was born with spina bifida but had corrective surgery, which could have left her severely disabled, as a tiny baby.

The condition, which is a developmental birth defect, was successfully treated but it paved the way for the 29-year-old to develop uneven shoulders and curvature of the spine to one side in adult life, known as scoliosis.

Standard treatment for scoliosis involves having metal rods fitted down the back in surgery lasting up to 12 hours in which a considerable amount of blood can be lost.

Tracey's mother suffered from scoliosis herself and underwent the operation but it went wrong and left her with severe back pain – a fate Tracey did not want to see repeated in her own life.

Tracey decided leading a healthy lifestyle and taking regular exercise was the best remedy for her condition but, when she took a job as a teacher, her pain levels shot up because she was on her feet all day.

Tracey decided to see her GP but was told she was an unsuitable candidate for surgery because she was born with spina bifida.

Instead with her mother's help, Tracey turned to a new clinic set up by a fellow scoliosis sufferer.

Kylie Hobson, clinic spokeswoman, said: "Founded and run by Erika Maude, who has scoliosis herself, the clinic opened just under five years ago and has since brought relief to hundreds of sufferers."

Tracey said the treatment had been successful, helping her improve her posture and reducing her pain.