

Emily takes plunge after spine agony

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A SCUBA diver told to give up her deep-sea dreams after a back-breaking diagnosis is finally back in the water.

Emily Harman, from Moseley, was diagnosed with scoliosis aged 19 after months of severe back pain.

The keen diver was told that the only way to cure the condition, which is a curvature of the spine, is to have invasive and risky surgery to insert rods into her vertebrae.

Distraught Emily, now 21, would have to give up her love of swimming forever and put her university plans on hold as it would take a year to recover.

But after hours of internet research, Emily discovered Scoliosis SOS, a clinic that helped her overcome her painful condition without the need to go under the knife.

Emily said: "I started to hate my body and could not stand the idea of going swimming. I used to sit against walls to hide it, and wear huge cardigans that were about four sizes

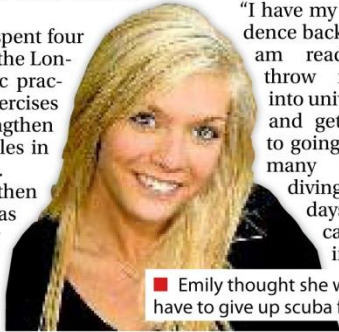
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I feel like a new person now, my back is straighter and I feel like I look normal again... I'm going on as many scuba diving holidays as I can fit in!
EMILY HARMAN

too big for me. I was so desperate to avoid the surgery, I would have tried anything.

"I am just so lucky that I found the clinic when I did."

Emily spent four weeks at the London clinic practicing exercises to strengthen the muscles in her spine.

Since then Emily was finally able to jump in the deep end and



■ Emily thought she would have to give up scuba forever

go on her first scuba diving holiday in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt, after being diagnosed with the devastating condition two years ago.

"Scuba diving again for the first time after being diagnosed with scoliosis was such an amazing feeling, I felt completely free and just like all of my worries had disappeared.

"It was also very emotional as it really was something that I thought I was never going to be able to get back to."

Now Emily, who also has a younger brother called Michael aged 19, plans to go to university in September to study marine biology.

"I feel like a new person now, my back is straighter and I feel like I look normal again.

"I have my confidence back and I am ready to throw myself into university and get back to going on as many scuba diving holidays as I can fit in!"



■ Emily Harman gets back to what she loves most