



Tennis ace conquers crippling back pain

In action: Tennis-mad James Taylor on court and, inset, receiving treatment. Right, an X-ray of his spine.

By Alison Dayani
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TENNIS-mad teenager James Taylor thought he might never be able to play the sport again when a rare painful condition caused his spine to curve.

The 15-year-old, from Edgbaston, faced having metal rods fitted down his back or gruelling spinal fusion surgery when he was diagnosed with Scoliosis.

Athletic James started to suffer from excruciating back pain in June last year and the only NHS treatment was to have a back brace for four years or go under the knife for a high risk major operation.

But that is when mum Alison

Taylor, a nursery nurse, discovered there were also new advanced therapy treatments and embarked on the alternative that has now seen James return to the tennis courts.

"Finding out that I had Scoliosis was life changing," said James, a pupil at Harborne High School.

"I am passionate about tennis and I knew that if I had my spine fused I would never be able to play again. Sitting on the side-lines watching my friends having fun was soul destroying."

Scoliosis affects just 0.4 per cent of young people and causes the spine to curve. It can eventually crush vital internal organs.

Scoliosis SOS has developed an advanced therapy combined with exercise that manipulates the spine without surgery.

"When my parents told me about the treatment I was ecstatic," added James, who wants to be a sports therapist. "I love sports so doing exercises to keep my back in good condition and to avoid surgery was not a problem."

"It was amazing to believe that even though my spine was curving, I could prevent it from getting worse by doing a few simple movements. It has given me a new lease of life and I'm looking forward to the summer as I missed out on so many tennis games last year."

Jo Head, consultant physiotherapist at Scoliosis SOS, said the therapy involves posture re-education, physiotherapy and osteotherapy.

"Hospital consultants are sending more and more patients to us as this is an emerging field," said Mr Head.

"It is about regaining muscle imbalance in the spine and teaching the brain to stand in line with central alignment. It involves stretches for the spine and avoids surgery."

FACTFILE

- Scoliosis is a condition that causes the spine to curve either from birth or often in adolescence, but more common in girls.
- In the UK, scoliosis affects three to four children out of every 1,000.
- It is taken from the Greek word skolios meaning 'crooked'.

- Symptoms include back pain, one shoulder being higher than the other, one hip being more prominent or in babies, they may consistently lie curved to one side.
- For advice and information on scoliosis visit website: www.scoliosisSOS.com or call 01394 389 670.