

Shocking results

The constant feeling of pins and needles is the reality for many. There are people who suffer from severe joint pain, arthritis and injuries. For those of us who suffer from one of these issues, there is a solution: physical therapy.

Almost three years ago, my knee popped out of place and since then I have suffered from severe pain in my knees. I visited several doctors, tried numerous remedies but my pain was not getting better. That was until late last year when I finally got an appointment with a professional in joint pain. He got me an appointment to try physical therapy (PT) for six weeks. At first, I was skeptical because I thought that it would not help, but I discovered that I was wrong.

The first part of my physical therapy was normal with stretches and using different pieces of workout equipment to strengthen my knees, but I found it odd when they told me that I would attach electrodes to my knees.

Many physical therapists have started using electrical stimulation for their patients. When I first learned that I was going to be shocked as part of my PT, I was worried. But, after the first time I did it, I saw immediate improvement. I walked out of my first session already feeling 10 times better than when I walked in.

[Electrical stimulation](#) can be used for inflammation, contracted or weak muscles and pain or spasms. There are many types of electrical stimulation, but the one that I used was [Transcutaneous Electrical Neuromuscular Stimulation \(TENS\)](#). This is used to decrease pain by sending electrodes into painful areas of the body.

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It is important that when you have your first evaluation to

ask the physical therapist about any contradictions pertaining to electrical stimulation.”

– Salem Karr

Although electrical stimulation works for most people, there are still risks. You could experience a muscle tear, skin irritation or tissue burn. This means that you have to be careful about the intensity of your electrodes and never do more than you can handle. Electrical stimulation should never be painful; however, if it is, you should lower the setting before you hurt yourself.

Of course, with every type of treatment, there are certain circumstances in which electrical stimulation should not be used.

It is necessary to see a professional if you begin to experience pain either from an injury or just randomly. Your pain needs to be checked out to make sure that nothing is wrong, and if there is, it is important to get help before it gets worse.

If you have to start physical therapy, do not be afraid. It is almost always effective and if it is, you will feel much better than you did before. Thanks to my PT, I have only used my knee braces once since I started, and I hope to never use them again.

I have finally finished my physical therapy, and while I still have some days where my pain is bad, most days I feel little to no pain.

I'll never sit still

She sits alone in a silent classroom. The squeaky desk provides no mercy. She can't sit still, so the desk attacks her main fear: being judged.

Several months ago, I was diagnosed with [Restless Leg Syndrome](#) (RLS, a condition characterized by a nearly irresistible urge to move the legs, typically in the evenings).

I've always known that I was an energetic kid. During my childhood, I was known for always dancing and running around the playground. I was in dance for eight years, and even then I was always moving around, even when the others were sitting still.

Once I realized dance classes were not for me, I quit. After that, I was just a typical freshman that only focused on family and school. I had no way to suffice my energy. For 10 hours a day, I was focusing on my schoolwork and home-life—nothing more, nothing less. Sitting in a desk for a great majority of that time was not helping my endless need to move.

I began to find simple ways to move while sitting in a desk. That included moving my fingers, hands, legs and toes. I was cooped up in a classroom to the point where my body could not handle sitting still anymore.

I went to the doctor, told her about my problems, and was given the diagnosis that I had RLS. I thought that it was a simple disorder, that the only part to it was that I wasn't active anymore, so I had to move my legs. After researching RLS more, I realized that all my [symptoms](#) weren't so simple. My symptoms include: gut-wrenching leg cramps, difficulty falling asleep, excessive daytime sleepiness, agonizing sleep deprivation, uncomfortable burning in my legs if I didn't move, and intense fatigue. Soon, I realized I'd had this my entire life.

All this time, I thought my horrible cramps were growing pains. I thought my sleeping problems were due to my lack of melatonin. I thought I didn't have a serious disorder.

I've always been the weird person no matter where I've been. After I learned about my RLS, I only felt weirder. I feel like anytime I'm in a public place, everyone looks down on me. For the longest time I thought that it would only get worse. The intense judging. The awful stares when the teacher calls on me got worse, and everyone looks at me like I'm an alien. I finally found friends that accepted me for who I was, and I no longer felt like an outsider, but now I had to deal with the physical side effects.

At the doctor's office, I was told I have a severe case of RLS. Typically, the symptoms only occur in the evening. However, mine occur 24/7, 365 days a year.

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– Savannah Downs

Unfortunately, there is no cure or treatment for RLS, so I'll have this for my entire life. I was told that there are some natural ways to help myself, such as drinking tonic water (which tastes like a vinegar-flavored soda), receiving massages and taking natural supplements that are designed for RLS.

After trying all these products, none helped. I had to find my own ways to help myself, which was terrifying. Not because I knew what would happen, but because I didn't know what would happen. I feared that I would have to take a crazy new medicine that would have awful side effects.

Eventually, I thought about how to help myself in a more mental way, than physical. I tried yoga, meditating and taking time for myself to start. After a month, I noticed that I wasn't in as much pain as I was before. I was creating an environment for myself that focused on helping condition and improving my mental health.

Now, I am slowly taking steps to finding ways to improve my happy attitude and help my condition. I plan on informing others about RLS and getting involved with my community to help others that know what I'm going through. The future looks bright for the girl that will never be still.

Double the name, double the pain

If you've known me for any amount of time you've probably been confused about my name at some point. Yes, I am Ashlyn Sander and yes, I am also Ashlyn Reeves. No, I don't have a doppelganger with the same first name as me, and yes, someone actually asked me that once.

I've tried my hardest to give an explanation for the two names. However, some people don't understand, and some people just never ask. So I figured I'd lay it all out for anyone who is curious.

My mom had me right out of high school, and with the wonderful support of my grandparents in preschool and daycare, I never realized my situation was any different from a kid who had both parents.

My mom's maiden name was Sander, therefore I was born a

Sander, my biological dad's last name is Whitaker, but my mom sat through many court dates for my last name not to be Whitaker. Thank God.

I always knew who my biological father was. He and my mom were never together after I was born, but I visited his family on the holidays. He now has two other children and one step-son. However I've never been around his kids for more than a couple hours at a time on holidays, so I've always considered myself an only child.

When I was 6 years old, my mom got married to the man I had always considered Dad. His last name was Reeves. He and my mom had dated off and on in high school and began dating again when I was still in preschool.

He was always there for me as a father figure in my life. I strongly believe a dad is not who you share genes with, but who raises you and is always there for you.

When they got married I remember being so excited being able to attend my parents wedding. At six, I didn't know this wasn't a normal thing that occurred.

After they got married my mom's last name was also Reeves and, being six, I didn't understand why my last name was different than my parents, nor did I like it. So, I began going by Reeves. My elementary school knew my situation and let me go by Sander-Reeves, which was what was on my all my school stuff until I graduated fifth grade.

After my parents had gotten married my dad started the process of adopting me so he could become my legal father. It was a long, drawn out ordeal. I don't know the details of it all, but I do know the process was long and something always seemed to be going wrong.

The summer before sixth grade year my mom explained to me that middle school would be different. There, they didn't know my

situation and they probably didn't care to know. I would have to start going by Sander full time again, since it is the name on my legal documents. I didn't like it, but I knew she was right.

That summer I also made a Facebook, lying about my age of course, and I put my name down as Ashlyn Reeves. Thus began me being socially known as Ashlyn Reeves.

During October of my sixth grade year my parents got divorced. Although it was tough, looking back, it was probably the best outcome of the situation. After the divorce was finalized, my dad was still in the process of adopting me. But since he was no longer married to my mom made him legally some random man to me.

We eventually gave up on the adoption process, knowing the court and my biological dad would never allow it.

At this point, I've been going by Reeves socially for a couple of years, thinking one day it was going to be changed. Unfortunately, I can't just tell everyone I'd rather go by Sander now and drop Reeves to avoid confusion.

Reeves is what all my friends have known me by since elementary school, but on anything school related or legal I am Ashlyn Sander. I've changed most my social media to Sander-Reeves, or just simply Ashlyn, hoping to prevent some confusion. However, I've decided that when I go off to college I'm dropping Reeves and fully becoming Ashlyn Sander again.

This is an unusual situation to be in, but I've never looked at it negatively. It is just something I've had to deal with over the years. So yes, I am Ashlyn Sander and yes I am Ashlyn Reeves.