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# ‘I won’t let my osteoarthritis beat me!’

Brought to you by  **Voltarol**  
The joy of movement  
<https://www.voltarol.co.uk/pain/identify-your-pain-type/joint-pain/>



Keep on moving: Alison refuses to let her condition beat her CREDIT: PHILIP HAYNES

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...teacher Alison Bailey refused to be defined by her osteoarthritis, so she tried  
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**D**ance was Alison Bailey's life before she had osteoarthritis diagnosed (<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/wellbeing/living-with-osteoarthritis/>). And it still is, as the 49-year-old refuses to sit still and let the condition beat her.

In fact Alison, who lives in High Wycombe with her two sons aged 19 and 17, believes her active lifestyle has helped her to manage the pain in her joints.

The dance teacher received the diagnosis in 2013 after tearing a ligament. "I felt something go 'ping' in my right hip," she recalls. "I tried to carry on working but eventually had X-rays followed by an MRI scan, which confirmed significant wear and tear in both hips.



Active lifestyle: Alison's diagnosis has made her more open to trying new things CREDIT: PHILIP HAYNES

"I was shocked. I thought it happened to older people. At the time I was teaching street dance to kids in schools, which I had to give up. How could I explain to primary-age children why I wasn't able to get up off the floor after demonstrating a caterpillar move?"

"It made me feel really old. For years I hadn't even felt like I was in my forties. Now I felt my age and more. The pain was so exhausting, I would come home and sleep every afternoon. I also turned to comfort food, eating lots of chocolate and snacking, gaining around a stone. It just made me more miserable."

### Bouncing back

Determined to pull herself out of the slump, Alison vowed to continue teaching her adult classes as part of the Fitness League, leading seven sessions a week as a registered instructor with EMD UK (<https://emduk.org/>), the national governing body for group exercise.

"It was a huge challenge but class members were sympathetic," she says. "Most of them are in their fifties and sixties and have their own aches and pains. I actually feel more in tune with them. I understand what exercise they need, and my classes are low-impact. You have to keep moving and stretch your muscles and joints."

#### The joy of movement

Osteoarthritis is a condition in which the joints of the body become damaged, stop moving freely and become painful. While exercising, working or enjoying your hobbies, you may experience pain and swelling in your joints. Make osteoarthritis less of a pain with Voltarol® Emulgel® P which is clinically proven to relieve pain and inflammation in mild osteoarthritis. Voltarol® Emulgel® P aims to be a helping hand so you can do the things you love and experience the joy of movement. For more information, ask your chemist or visit [www.boots.com](http://www.boots.com). Voltarol® Emulgel® P contains diclofenac diethylammonium. Always read the label.

After steroid injections to ease the pain and inflammation, Alison had a hip replacement last August, which left her with one leg slightly longer than the other and requiring special built-up shoes. She was also advised by her consultant to give up modern jive, which she took part in socially.

"I was devastated," says Alison. "But I still have an active social life. I go out with friends a lot, and my sister and I go kayaking near our holiday home in Devon. On a clear day, we paddle out

https://adclick.g.doubleclick.net/pcs.click%253Fax%253DAK40t8sG.com/2Y8Z7v67p1bPFFPQWU...so peaceful. I'm even having surfing lessons in August. The diagnosis has made me more open to trying new things.  
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## Fit as ever

“I’ve changed my diet, joined a gym and am back in a size 10. The weight loss and doing specific exercises has made a huge difference to my energy levels. I feel more like myself again.

“I use a topical pain relief gel if I feel a twinge, and have regular sports massages. It hurts at the time but I find it really helps because of my work. And I won’t give up teaching. Not ever. Even if I end up doing chair exercises in my seventies. I love what I do. It’s in my blood. I won’t let this beat me.”

To others dealing with a diagnosis, Alison offers this advice: “Just try to keep moving. Gentle exercise won’t make it any worse, but keeping mobile and fit can really help.”

## Living with osteoarthritis

This series of Telegraph articles, brought to you by Voltarol, is about osteoarthritis and how to reduce the pain and swelling it causes, so you can continue doing the sports, hobbies and jobs you love.

Voltarol<sup>®</sup> Emulgel<sup>®</sup> P is clinically proven to relieve pain and inflammation in mild osteoarthritis. By applying it directly to the affected area, Voltarol<sup>®</sup> Emulgel<sup>®</sup> P’s active ingredient diclofenac diethylammonium targets the source of pain.

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