

Living well with MS isn't a stretch



Wellness is for everybody. And for people living with multiple sclerosis, incorporating wellness practices into their everyday lives is a key component of symptom management. In fact, [a recent survey of more than 6,900 people with MS](#) found that healthier diets and lifestyles were associated with lower levels of disability.

Practicing wellness can take many forms. Eating a healthy diet and incorporating physical activity into your life are good ways to improve your physical wellness. Staying mindful of your feelings and socializing with others can also help your mental wellbeing.

For many people living with MS, physical activity that connects the mind and body through controlled breathing, like yoga and Pilates, do more than just help soothe physical symptoms.

“The first few times I did it, I actually started crying at the end of the yoga session because it was the first time in months I had felt like myself,” said Clarisa, diagnosed in 2006.

Yoga helped Clarisa acknowledge the places where her body didn't feel well. Practicing the discipline gave her the opportunity to make those places feel better.

Elsa, diagnosed in 1999, has been doing yoga and Pilates for years. Not only have they made her body stronger, they've helped prevent her from falling and injuring herself.

“My core is stronger and I'm able to catch myself,” she said. “It doesn't mean I don't have balance issues, but I'm able to catch myself more as I go down.”

Taking care of your body through physical activity or physical therapy can be a smart wellness practice. But mental wellness is important, too, especially for people living with MS. After all, depression is an often overlooked symptom of the disease. A productive mental

wellness practice can help you stay aware of your feelings and encourage healthy relationships with others.

For Elysa, diagnosed in 1989, part of her mental wellness practice involved a change in perspective. Rather than conserve her energy so she could do things around the house, she made the decision to instead conserve her energy for getting out of the house, socializing and taking classes with her friends.

“I benefit from feeling so much less isolated. I chat with people more. I initiate,” said Elysa.

Elysa discovered this wellness strategy in a program offered by the National MS Society. Whether you need support with your mental wellness or ideas for physical activities, like the yoga practices that benefitted Clarisa and Elsa, the Society is here to help you live well with MS.

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