Yan Yishu
China

My name is Yan Yishu and I am 21 years old. I am studying in ZhengZhou, HeNan Province, which is in central China and is the birthplace of Chinese medicine and ShaoLin Kung Fu. My major subject is clinical traditional Chinese medicine and I am in my third year. I want to tell others how I manage my ankylosing spondylitis by doing exercise and how I have improved my sports life in spite of my rheumatic disease. I want to share my experience and happiness with others.

My hometown is Dalian, a beautiful seaside city famous for football.

I had a happy childhood. I liked to swim and play football when I was in middle school, but in 2005, when I was 15 years old, my right leg was injured whilst playing football. I thought it was just a pulled muscle in my leg, but within a month things had become much worse, even though I had physiotherapy. My right hip swelled up and became extremely painful. I could not play football anymore and a year later I was diagnosed with ankylosing spondylitis and HLA-B27 positive at the Beijing Union Medical College Hospital. In the beginning I was sent to many large hospitals all over China, but the experience of going to big hospitals can be full of highs and lows. Sometimes, I had to fly to other cities alone in order to see doctors. When I got off the plane I was unable to walk so had to use the wheelchair offered by the airport.

Whilst I was ill I read many medical books and researched the latest western advances in treating ankylosing spondylitis in order to be able to work better with my doctors. I am eagerly awaiting advanced medical treatments, such as stem cell transplants.

Now, however, I am very well and am an ordinary university student, but I believe something miraculous has happened to me. I have many courses to study, I keep doing physical exercise nearly every day to prepare myself for the changeable weather between autumn and winter. For the past two years I haven’t had to take any medicine for my ankylosing spondylitis.

“I learned to enjoy Tai Chi, ShaoLin Kung Fu, Qi Gong, horizontal bar, parallel bar, dumbbell and running.”
This summer, I swam as far as 5,000 meters out to sea and I also gained my national social swimming instructor’s certificate. I also took part in a big Tai Chi and Kung Fu show held by my university.

Having a sound mind in a sound body is always a good thing. The combination of my knowledge, being physically active, medicine, acupuncture and Chinese health philosophy helps me recover when I am ill. To keep my body in good condition, I am careful about the food I eat, getting enough sleep, relaxation and being physically active.

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