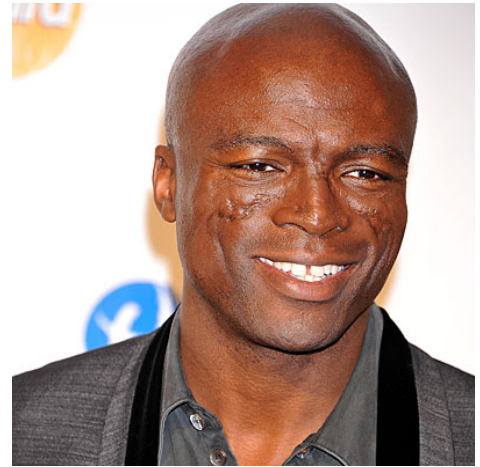


Pilates & Lupus

Lupus is a condition which I had little knowledge and experience of until I met a wonderful Pilates instructor, Sonia Munafo, who suffers from the condition.

Lupus is the latin word for wolf and the condition is so named due to the severe facial rash, which rarely manifests itself now, thought to resemble a wolf bite. The scars on singer Seal's face are the result of *Lupus*

Lupus is a complex and poorly understood condition. It is an incurable, highly variable autoimmune system disease which affects individuals differently. It affects an estimated 15,000 people in England and Wales of which 90% are women, commonly of a child bearing age (15-55). It is less common in white Europeans and more in those of African, Caribbean or Asian descent.



For reasons not fully understood, the immune system produces excess antibodies to cells which cause inflammation processes and tissue damage anywhere in the body.

As with other autoimmune conditions such as rheumatoid arthritis, a combination of genetic and environmental factors are thought to be the cause. Another main trigger appears to be hormonal activity and changes, such as childbirth, menopause and puberty.

The symptoms of *Lupus* are so varied and it can be easily confused with other conditions due to similar symptoms. This causes it to be hard to diagnose and meanwhile major organs, mainly the kidneys and skin but also the heart, lungs and brain, can be irreversibly damaged.

The major symptoms are joint and muscle pain and extreme fatigue. Other symptoms which may be present are

- Rashes
- Depression
- Hair loss
- Mouth ulcers
- Headaches
- Miscarriage

Sonia further explained,

I am sure you are aware that there are different types of Lupus and that there is no case the same as the other as the symptoms felt by the people varies. The combination of different organs involved create different symptoms. That is also a reason why there has hardly any research been done on Lupus.

I have observed myself throughout my illness and the only thing I can say for sure is that gentle exercise is the best for immune disorder sufferers. Any intensity is not recommended as the symptoms can flare up and when they do it is no fun.

I believe that autoimmune disorders are caused by being in a constant flight and flight mode giving the body never really a rest therefore any exercises focusing on rest and digest are great.

When I spoke to my Lupus doctor we discussed exercising and he agreed with me saying that people who exercise have less flare ups and are in general with less symptoms.

I also believe and have tested on myself that another important thing for people with an autoimmune disorders is to change their diet as that is also part of flare ups. There is a Paleo - Autoimmune diet, but than we are all individual and observing ourselves helps to identify outside causes that can bring about the flare ups.

Pilates has provided the perfect exercise programme for Sonia, allowing her to work at her own pace, paying attention to her form and technique and essential rest when necessary.

References

<http://www.lupusuk.org.uk>