

HOW I AM DEALING WITH POST-POLIO SYNDROME

By Gene Bazan

My sister, brother and I all came down with polio as children in the late summer of 1953. My sister, who has had debilitating PPS for many years, put me in touch with your support group when she realized I had also developed PPS three years ago. The advice and personal accounts I found in your newsletter have helped me cope with this condition, and I appreciate your efforts so much. I mention here the three approaches which have helped me in order of their perceived efficacy.

First, following Dr. Richard Bruno's advice in *The Polio Paradox*, I reduced drastically my activity level. I realized within two weeks that I was on the right track, but it took over two years of experimentation to reduce my activity to the point where I began to feel and perform consistently better. Before my sister's "diagnosis," I felt so depleted that I could not face the day. I suffered from most of the symptoms described in Dr. Bruno's book. Paid work became difficult in the extreme. No medical doctor had been able to figure out what was wrong. My regular doctor had overlooked his note of childhood polio on my initial intake form, but I doubt he knew enough to make the connection between my increasingly severe symptoms and PPS.

Second, I made adjustments in my diet. Most importantly, I revamped my breakfast by making it a more significant meal; it is more like a hearty lunch. I include sardines, kidney beans, hijiki seaweed, and raw vegetables; I definitely feel better and more energetic during the day. The raw vegetables have helped to relieve constipation which is particularly severe during winter. Wheat bran and psyllium have improved things further. I take digestive enzymes with meals. I was amazed to find that foods which I had trouble digesting were among those Peter

D'Adamo suggested were detrimental to individuals with my blood type, so I dropped these from my diet (*Right Diet for Your Type*). On the advice of alternative practitioners, I now soak all grains overnight and throw out the soak water before cooking. I hadn't realized this is a common practice in traditional cuisines, and among those who follow a macrobiotic diet. I reviewed confirming articles on the web under the search terms "sprouting grains, antinutrients" and "sprouting beans, antinutrients." I had hypoglycemia for years, which PPS exacerbated. I have largely stripped sugar in all its forms from my diet and began using stevia, which we now grow in our garden. My hypoglycemia has disappeared.

Third, I tried numerous supplements. With one exception, I have not noticed any detectable difference in muscle fatigue, pain reduction or energy levels. The exception is Ashwaganda, an Indian herb used in Ayurvedic medicine. Ashwaganda stimulates acetylcholine production, required in all nerve-muscle junctions that allow skeletal muscles to contract. It also reduces stress and relieves anxiety. I grow this herb in our garden, dry the root, and use it to make batches of tea for daily use in winter. I have also found St. John's Wort useful for heightening mood, and take a tincture daily in the winter that I make from plants we grow in our garden.

For insomnia, I have found relief taking magnesium, melatonin, valerian, hops, and lemon balm, the last three as tinctures made from herbs we grow in our garden. I don't take all of these each night, but vary what I take.

Fourth, since allopathic medicine has no cure for PPS, I felt I had nothing to lose by trying alternative modalities. Providentially, in my professional life I had worked with individuals interested in alternative healing therapies and devices, and had access to a wide variety of these. I tried many "energy medicine" therapies to no avail (jin shin jyutsu, chi-gong, Reiki, cranial-sacral, Brennan energy medicine, Emi-

lie Conrad's "Continuum"). I traveled to Brazil to visit Joao de Deus, a noted faith healer, without experiencing any physical improvement. I worked with a homeopathic practitioner, and tried a number of preps, one of which helped with a period of anxiety this past summer. Among the "devices," I tried numerous electro-magnetic devices, light and sound devices, and others. Except for one I will mention next, I could detect no improvement in energy levels, muscle use, or pain and fatigue reduction.

The one exception was the Energetic Fitness System (www.energeticfitness.net). My wife received one of these devices in the university lab where she tests alternative healing devices. I began using it last summer daily for half an hour. After three weeks, I found myself one morning having climbed a flight of stairs in our house without the usual muscle pain and fatigue attending each step! I realized I hadn't done that since the onset of PPS! I also felt less pain and fatigue walking around our yard. I also feel more alert, and experience less brain fog. These benefits were a major boon! I trudge less! I don't think this device is regenerating neurons, so I am mindful of spending the benefit at the cost of more rapidly wearing out my neurons.

Of course, I keep my eyes (and mind) open for other approaches. I have read positive reports on the effect of HBOT (hyperbaric oxygen treatment) for neurological conditions. It is expensive, and I have not tried this yet.

When I first realized I had developed PPS three years ago, I gave up recreational walking, hiking, cycling, and working out at the gym. This was tough, but necessary and ultimately beneficial, just as Dr. Bruno predicted. This past fall, with Dr. Bruno's help, I received my first disability check. I now occupy myself with our garden and house. I limit myself to one volunteer activity – the Master Gardeners program at our state university. I limit socializing to close friends and our regular music group. When we go out, I park in a handicapped space. I give

occasional help of a limited nature to professional colleagues when they ask; otherwise, I have put paid work behind me.

In the morning, I do a brief chi-gong routine in the yard. This has helped me improve my balance and has reduced stumbling dramatically. I follow this with a half hour of stretching. I take an afternoon nap, falling asleep to the Hemi-Sync music of The Monroe Institute. I meditate briefly on retiring. My sister sent me two helpful devices: a stool on wheels, which has made working in the kitchen so much easier; and an electric toothbrush, which relieves muscle cramping in my hand.

I am grateful to Dr. Bruno for his path-breaking work. I appreciate more than ever my supportive wife, family and friends. I am thankful for each new day.

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