

PULSE MEDICAL TECHNOLOGIES
THE POCKET PAINKILLER

Daily Express Tuesday July 29, 2008 (extract)

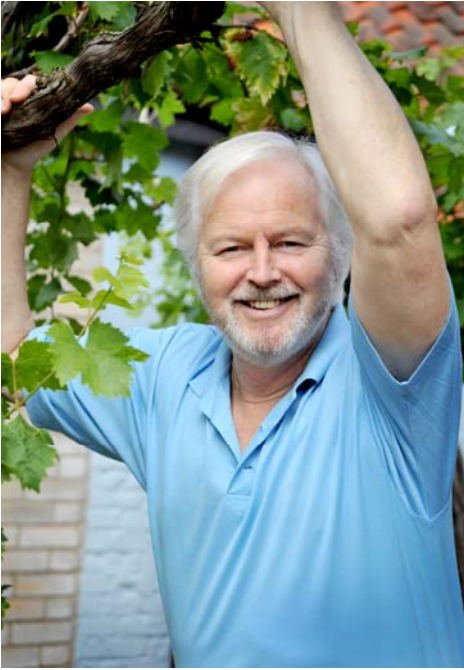


**Read Dads Army's Ian Lavender's
Back Pain Story**



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LONG SUFFERING: Actor Ian has had back trouble since Dad's Army

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Dad's army star Ian Lavender suffered from back pain for more than 30 years. He tells FIONA DUFFY how he finally alleviated his agony...

Ian Lavender's back problems started more than three decades ago, when he slipped off a kerb into the gutter and trapped his foot under a parked car.

It was 1974 and the now 62-year-old actor, best known for his role as "stupid boy" Private Pike in Dad's Army, was coming home from a football match in Newcastle. The accident ruptured the Achilles tendon in his ankle. He was made to wear a light cast to help it heal but thought nothing more of it.

"About two years later I was kneeling down wrapping a parcel when I felt a searing pain in my back," he recalls. "It was as if someone had hit me across the back with a plank of wood. My wife Michele came in and couldn't understand why I was lying on the floor. I couldn't move or walk and she insisted I see an osteopath."

The therapist explained that following the rupturing of his Achilles tendon, Ian had been favouring the injured leg when he walked. "As a result my pelvis had become misaligned until eventually a nerve had become trapped near the third and fourth lumbar vertebrae of my spine."

He visited the osteopath for regular sessions of manipulation but he was told that once a weakness like this occurs it is always there.

"From then on, I'd suffer really painful flare-ups," says Ian, also known for his role as Derek Harkinson in EastEnders. "I could go for months without any problems then they'd come on without warning. Theatre work involves long periods of standing, which doesn't help. Even just bending to pick something up could trigger a painful spasm."

"Sometimes I'd feel twinges and get myself to the osteopath for pre-emptive treatment. Other times my back would just go."

A few years later, Ian was performing in a farce in which he had to physically support an actor who was pretending to be dead. "I had to drag him around the stage for the best part of an hour. At one point I stumbled on a rug and fell.

The actor landed on me as a dead weight. Because he was supposed to be dead, he made no effort to get off me. My back was in agony but we just about finished the performance. From then on my back has troubled me even more."

For 33 years Ian visited his osteopath twice a year for treatment which included gentle stretching and manipulations. He also managed the pain with heat pads and prescription painkillers. But recently the pain increased.

"Last year I had to see my osteopath four times. Once during rehearsals I leaned forward to turn

PULSE MEDICAL TECHNOLOGIES

a music page and couldn't straighten up again. My back seized up completely. I ended up being taken off in a taxi to a Harley Street clinic for manipulations by the osteopath there. It was only those sessions and continued treatment with my regular osteopath which enabled me to carry on working."

Nevertheless, Ian never considered taking it easy. Eight months ago, when he and Michele moved to a Suffolk mill house needing major renovation work, he decided to tackle it single-handedly.

By chance, a neighbour told Ian about a hand-held gadget called the PainWave X4000. The device delivers pulsed electromagnetic field therapy (PEMF) and was developed initially to provide pain relief for sufferers of orthopaedic conditions, such as osteoarthritis or sciatica.

"People often suggested cures over the years and I'm a bit of a sceptic. But I agreed to try it out to keep him quiet," says Ian.

Unlike the more common Transcutaneous Electrical Nerve Stimulator (TENS unit) or micro electric current therapy, the PainWave X4000 does not block pain signals.

Instead, it penetrates the cells around the area of pain, stimulating oxygen usage and increasing blood supply, thereby reducing inflammation and swelling. It also encourages the release of endorphins, the body's natural pain-relieving chemicals.

"It looks like a torch with a ball on the end," says Ian. "It emits a tiny gentle pulse which is quite soporific. You move it over the area you want to treat. You can use it as often as you like but I tend to use it twice a day."

To Ian's astonishment, it worked. "I haven't had back twinges or pain now for more than five months, which is remarkable. It also seems to be preventing further injury. I've been carrying out renovations to our property, which involves lots of crawling about in tiny spaces, lifting and general physical work.

Normally this would have taken a toll on my body and increased my visits to the osteopath but I've hardly had any aches at all. And as an extra benefit, I find the treatment really relaxing."

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PainWave

