

The Power of Persistence

HOW THE ALEXANDER TECHNIQUE HELPED STROKE SURVIVOR **JAMES POWER** THROUGH HIS FIRST 26 MILE MARATHON

James Power was just six-years-old when he had a stroke, a devastating diagnosis which changed everything and left him unable to walk and struggling to use his left side. Born left-handed, James had to learn to use his right hand to write and learn to walk again. As a long-term sufferer from dystonia (muscle stiffness), back and neck pain following his childhood stroke, he learned to move without pain and discomfort thanks to the Alexander Technique which has led James to complete his very first marathon last October, raising over £1,500 for the Stroke Association.

But how was the experience for James? He recalls: "So the first half was great - lovely pace and energy. I got a painful cramp and hit a wall where I felt drained and had to slow down and really go back to the basics of listening to my body and finding ways to keep moving without picking up any injuries."

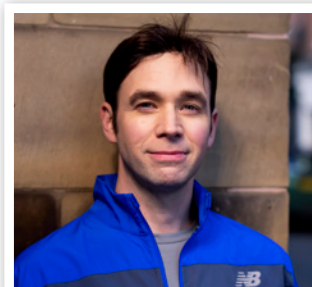
He also reflects: "I felt The Chester Marathon had a fantastic atmosphere. You could really get a sense of everyone supporting each other."

James is an inspiration to fellow stroke sufferers, and offers advice to anyone who has experienced a stroke and is worried about the future and what it means for

their health. He shares: "After my stroke, I remember vividly feeling despair and seeing my family's reaction to my condition which was really upsetting. Recovery from stroke does take time but there is help out there. I would say to someone who has had a stroke, do not give up. You can make progress, just approach each day with fresh eyes."

Keen to pass on his knowledge and experience, James, who is a registered member of The Society of Teachers of the Alexander Technique, founded Find Your Backbone in Knutsford in 2024. Today his clients include elite athletes, leaders in business and people suffering from back pain, neck pain and stress from all walks of life. James used the Technique to help him focus on the marathon and train without injury.

He shares: "A big part of Alexander Technique is having the right attitude, stopping and thinking so I learned how to be more aware of my reactions to stress and poor habits. I found I could stop doing the wrong things and let the right thing do itself. For example, when I was getting tired, rather than pulling down and hunching my shoulders, I still found it was possible to



maintain good form and move quite freely, allowing my whole body to expand through the movement."

James Power now teaches

at the Manchester Alexander Training School and at his studio in Knutsford near Tatton Park within the Soul Reformer Pilates Studio. 📍

findyourbackbone.com

Instagram: @findyourbackbone



Find Your Backbone

James' Top 3 Tips for Running a Marathon

#1 - Slow down. You will make much more progress if you can train without getting injuries. Take your time to build up your mileage each week and enjoy the process.

#2 - Listen. When training, take out your headphones and listen to the sound your feet are making on the floor. Notice if you can run quietly and get as much feedback from your feet as possible.

#3 - Rest. One of the most important parts of training for a marathon is respecting your body's need for sleep and recovery time.

