Member Spotlight

Bobby Rigney, NATX Member Since 2015

When asked about his journey with neuropathy, Bobby Rigney began: “Well, I was born in a log cabin that I built with my own two hands,” explaining that no matter the details of his symptoms and diagnosis, his sense of humor has been crucial for him while accepting his new life with neuropathy. Bobby had an avid runner for years but now he remembers the day Texas Independence Day—March 2, 2011— that he developed back pain unlike any he had experienced before. The next day, his toes were tingling.

Guessing this numbness might be due to an electrolyte imbalance, Bobby consulted his urologist, being advised that was not the case. He then sought his PCP who immediately diagnosed him with spinal stenosis. After being referred to a physical therapist, a chiropractor, and a neurologist who diagnosed him with an EMG, Bobby opted for lumbar decompression surgery. Before the surgery, however, his doctor found a benign shear tumor around a nerve in his vertebrum from an MRI scan. In removing the tumor, Bobby suffered some damage to his L2 nerve root which lost the signal from his vertebrae to his left foot. His neuropathy symptoms worsened, and although his foot was numb, he was still able to feel burning pain. Throughout all the back-and-forth with all his various healthcare providers, Bobby made sure to always keep his PCP, the “quarterback” of his healthcare team, informed.

While it was a struggle to adjust to his new, slower pace of life, Bobby was particularly grateful to his physical therapists for helping him confront his new limitations and develop a strategy to cope. Also in one of his sessions, Bobby experienced the undeniable connection between his mind and his physical symptoms and has since committed to practicing gratitude and a positive spirit. He notes that it’s important to “know who your cheerleaders are and to let them know that you are thankful for them. To stay positive is to be honest to yourself that it is this time in life being self-aware, and as humans, we all want to understand, and to be understood.”

Bobby commits to staying active and being very involved in his community, explaining, “We have to come to grips with our neuropathy in a practical way, and the most practical way to get engaged with a group that understands.” He has a near perfect attendance at the Austin-West support group meetings and regularly participates in NATX’s Tai Chi classes, which have significantly helped his proprioception (position sense) and overall health. Quoting Woody Allen, Bobby stresses that “Eighty percent of your problems are due to your bad thinking, and twenty percent are due to your bad habits.” Bobby commits to staying active and being very involved in his community, explaining, “We have to come to grips with our neuropathy in a practical way, and the most practical way to get engaged with a group that understands.” He has a near perfect attendance at the Austin-West support group meetings and regularly participates in NATX’s Tai Chi classes, which have significantly helped his proprioception (position sense) and overall health. Quoting Woody Allen, Bobby stresses that “Eighty percent of your problems are due to your bad thinking, and twenty percent are due to your bad habits.”

Our vision is that anyone in Texas afflicted with or affected by neuropathy receives the support and information at our ongoing organizational and community initiatives. If you or someone you know is interested in the rewarding experience of serving on our Board of Directors to help guide the future of NATX, we are always looking for volunteers to help with our walking (great for those neuropathy patients out there who have trouble walking)!

Now, you may be asking, “How can I get involved?” I’m glad you asked! We are actively seeking motivated individuals who are interested in the rewarding experience of serving on our Board of Directors to help guide the future of NATX. We are always looking for volunteers with our ongoing organizational and community initiatives. If you or someone you know is interested in the opportunity to serve on our Board or volunteer, whatever your background, please contact NATX for more information at info@neuropathyalliancetx.org or (512)939-0390.

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED
Neuropathy Alliance of Texas Health Fair
Saturday, September 30
NATX is excited to offer a new educational event for neuropathy patients and caregivers to learn about their health and wellness options and resources to improve the quality of life. Please stay tuned for more details later this summer.

We are currently seeking sponsors and vendors to showcase their local services! If you are a healthcare professional or an organization that offers services for neuropathy patients, please contact us for information about renting a booth: info@neuropathyalliancetx.org or (512)553-9130.

Photo from Can Stock Photo/ ayzek

Top Golf Fundraiser
Sunday, November 5, 12-4 PM
Build a team and come have fun with us late fall to help support NATX! Please stay tuned for more information. Sponsorships are available.

Do you tweet? Please follow us @neuropathytx
We have set up a new Twitter account and are excited to regularly share neuropathy news and interesting articles with you to help you learn more about your condition and ways to help improve your daily living. twitter.com/neuropathytx

Tai Chi Research Project Complete!
In partnership with the Dell Jewish Community Center and thanks to a grant from St. David’s Foundation Health’s Angels in 2016, NATX has concluded research on the benefits of Tai Chi as an alternative treatment for neuropathy patients.

Purpose: To determine the effects of Tai Chi on chronic health conditions and how participation in Tai Chi impacts the ability and willingness of participants to manage their health.

Findings: 63 participants (age range=53-91) completed a twice weekly 12 week Tai Chi class. Participants’ single leg balance was significantly improved, and 31.3% reported their conditions getting significantly improved, and 31.3% reported their conditions getting significantly improved, and 31.3% reported their conditions getting significantly improved, and 31.3% reported their conditions getting significantly improved, and 31.3% reported their conditions getting significantly improved.

10 Ways to Manage Your Diabetic Neuropathy
1. Control your blood sugar. Eat a healthy diet and take your medications or insulin as directed by your doctor.
2. Wear shoes that fit well. Ask your podiatrist which shoes and socks will work well for you.
3. Don’t have bare feet... even at the beach. If you get a cut and don’t feel it, that can lead to a dangerous infection.
4. Keep your feet clean and check them daily. Check for sores, cuts, blisters, calluses, ingrown toenails, toenail fungus, redness or signs of infection in them.
5. Exercise! If you are able to, exercise can help keep your neuropathy symptoms at bay. Consult a physical therapist or trainer if you need safe exercise tips.
6. Make regular doctor visits.
7. Try acupuncture. This ancient Chinese alternative treatment may not work for everyone, but it has helped some neuropathy patients in the long-term.
8. Try capsaicin cream. Capsaicin is what makes hot peppers hot and can serve as a pain reliever.
9. Consider Supplements. Alpha lipoic acid is an antioxidant and can help control blood sugar.
10. If a doctor advises a diet, follow it. You are to be engaged in more preventive and healthy behaviors. You will have gained the knowledge, skill and experience to take on a leadership role in managing your own healthcare and to make more informed decisions.

Thank you to everyone who partnered with NATX in this research! If you have neuropathy, we encourage you to try Tai Chi as an affordable, alternative treatment that can have a powerful effect on your overall health and neuropathy symptoms.

Supplements: Taking What Your Body Needs
Do you just guess what vitamins you think your body needs and take those pills accordingly? Did you know there is now a genetics test available that you can take to figure out exactly which supplements your body is deficient in?

For those of you who attended our support group meeting in Georgetown in May, you heard Chris McKee, CMC talk about “Nutrigenomics,” a new technology that has opened up the world of nutrition for their clients. This technology helps individuals individually target vitamins and minerals they might need to take or avoid based on each individual’s circumstances. This could be an interesting opportunity, and to learn more, you can check out this article published by Kiviard: Nutrigenomics: Perspectives: “Nutrigenomics: The Genome-Food Interface by M. Nathaniel Mead. https://www.genome-food.org/press/1111.html

*Please note that Neuropathy Alliance does not endorse any businesses, services or products. We only share information like this to help keep the neuropathy community informed of what opportunities are available. Not every pathway works for everyone.

We Need Your Help!
If you can share any information with us about the following, please contact us at info@neuropathyalliancetx.org

1. Young Adult Network
Are you or someone you know between the ages of 18-45 living with neuropathy? If so, we would like to talk to you about ways that we can better support you! We need to know who you are before we can improve our outreach.

2. Local Resource List
Do you have a favorite: • Anacupuncturist • Massage therapist • Nutritionist • Pain management doctor • Physical therapist • Podiatrist • Is there something that you, as a patient or caregiver, need that you have found helpful and are not currently accessing? We would like to compile a list of all these helpful local resources for our community.

3. Board Member Recruitment
We are currently seeking leadership with an ambitious spirit to join our board, especially for folks with the following backgrounds: • Fundraising • Marketing • Social work

All nominations will be considered but not guaranteed placement.

Upcoming Support Group Meetings
Please check our website soon for each meeting’s topic!

Austin West Location
Website https://www.facebook.com/events/241572794413081/
717 Beec Ave, Austin 78756
August 14
September 11
October 9
November 6

Georgetown Location
Lake Aire Shopping Center
7100 Williams Dr, Suite 101
Georgetown 78628
March 22
May 24
September 11
November 13

Austin/Northwest Hills Location
Dell Jewish Community Center
7300 Hart Ln., Austin 78731.
August 28
October 9
November 6
 Apparel

Ankle braces prevent your joints from moving in a way that could lead to pain. However, they won’t help with neuropathy, as it is caused by nerve damage and not by movement.

Neuropathy Alliance encourages you to attend classes advertised in this newsletter, to register, and to experience a difference in your health.

The results of several clinical studies suggest that regular participation in Tai Chi can help with balance, circulation, muscle strength, stress, disease as well as general well-being. Your class is open to all levels of Tai Chi experience. Beginners and first-timers are welcome!

Southwest Austin – Unity Church of Austin, 7001 West Highway 290, Austin 78737. Thursday, 5:30 PM. $30 for walk-ins, $25 for members. Please visit our website to register.

Georgetown – 2423 Williams Dr., Georgetown 78628. Thursday, 3:00 PM. $15/25/35/class. Please visit our website to register.

Northwest Hills – 7300 Hart Ln., Austin 78731. Tuesdays and Fridays 10-12 AM, 9:30-11 PM. Please visit our website to register.

Did you know there is now a genetics test available that you can take to figure out exactly which supplements your body is deficient in?

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