

N.B. by this stage in the article, you are probably thinking,

"Just how on earth am I supposed to find the money to do all these things?"

Granted, it is not cheap to do all the various options, but then, we are all only too aware of how costly being chronically ill is.

Firstly, remember you only need to start with the simple things, one at a time.

Secondly, measures such as consulting a chiropractor need not be done every week; if funds don't allow regular visits, then perhaps it can be kept as an emergency measure, for acute flare-ups. (You may need to put some money by to cover for up to 5 treatments> which should not be more than ?80-100 altogether)

Thirdly, whilst this article attempts to cover the majority of the many options available, it should not be taken as a 'shopping list'; you will have noted that I have used a * notation in the long lists, so that you can see which are most likely to be of greatest help. I have also borne in mind the logistics and availability of the various therapies, of which of course cost is a significant factor.

Using a prepayment certificate for prescription medication should help to reduce costs (annual certificate is ?86 at present)

As far as supplements go: the most important aspect BY FAR is diet. If you cannot manage to afford any supplements, then try to ensure you have a diet high in vitamins and minerals (fresh fruit and vegetables especially) which will set you in good stead.

Vitamins can be bought relatively inexpensively from supermarkets these days (or Superdrug stores are fairly reasonably priced). Try to use at least vitamin C, vitamin B complex and some fish liver oil.

By shopping around (and possibly using Mail Order firms) you may be able to get other supplements and herbal preparations on special offer: for instance, I recently bought a year's supply of glucosamine for ?15.

Aromatherapy oils are around ?3-4 per bottle and you will probably find 2 or 3 different ones in combination will be best for you: you may need to shell out for an initial consultation with an aromatherapist, but thereafter, you can mix the oils yourself in a carrier oil. The massage: well, you need a willing partner or friend to do this, though you can do some on yourself.

Hopefully you should have leisure facilities in your area which cater for disabled people and usually you can get a discount for annual membership: mine cost ?77 (normal rate is over ?200): I can swim, take spa baths, use the gym etc. as often as I wish.

Swimming is a really good form of exercise: if you cannot do any other (classes for T'ai chi etc. being fairly expensive and necessitating travel to and fro) then if you can do at least 1 half-hour session swimming and 3 or 4 10-15 minute walks per week, you will have had a little exercise.

I am lucky enough to have a special disabled pool nearby, which has warmer water than other pools: it may be worthwhile investigating what is available near you.

Beds: a new one IS a big expense (I know that only too well as I am saving up for one myself): but perhaps using an interest-free option may help to spread the cost. Don't be tempted by gimmicks: you really just need a firm mattress that adequately supports your back.

Of course, if you're feeling really flush, you might like to try a waterbed: supportive without exerting pressure on the hips and shoulder, and can be constantly warmed.

Spa baths: yes, they are costly: you can join the local health club and use theirs, and perhaps save up slowly for your own. (good ones are about ?600+, don't waste your money on cheap ones)

Basically, I would hate you to be put off trying to use a wholistic regime because of cost. There are numerous little ways to implement the principles of the regime without necessarily bankrupting oneself!