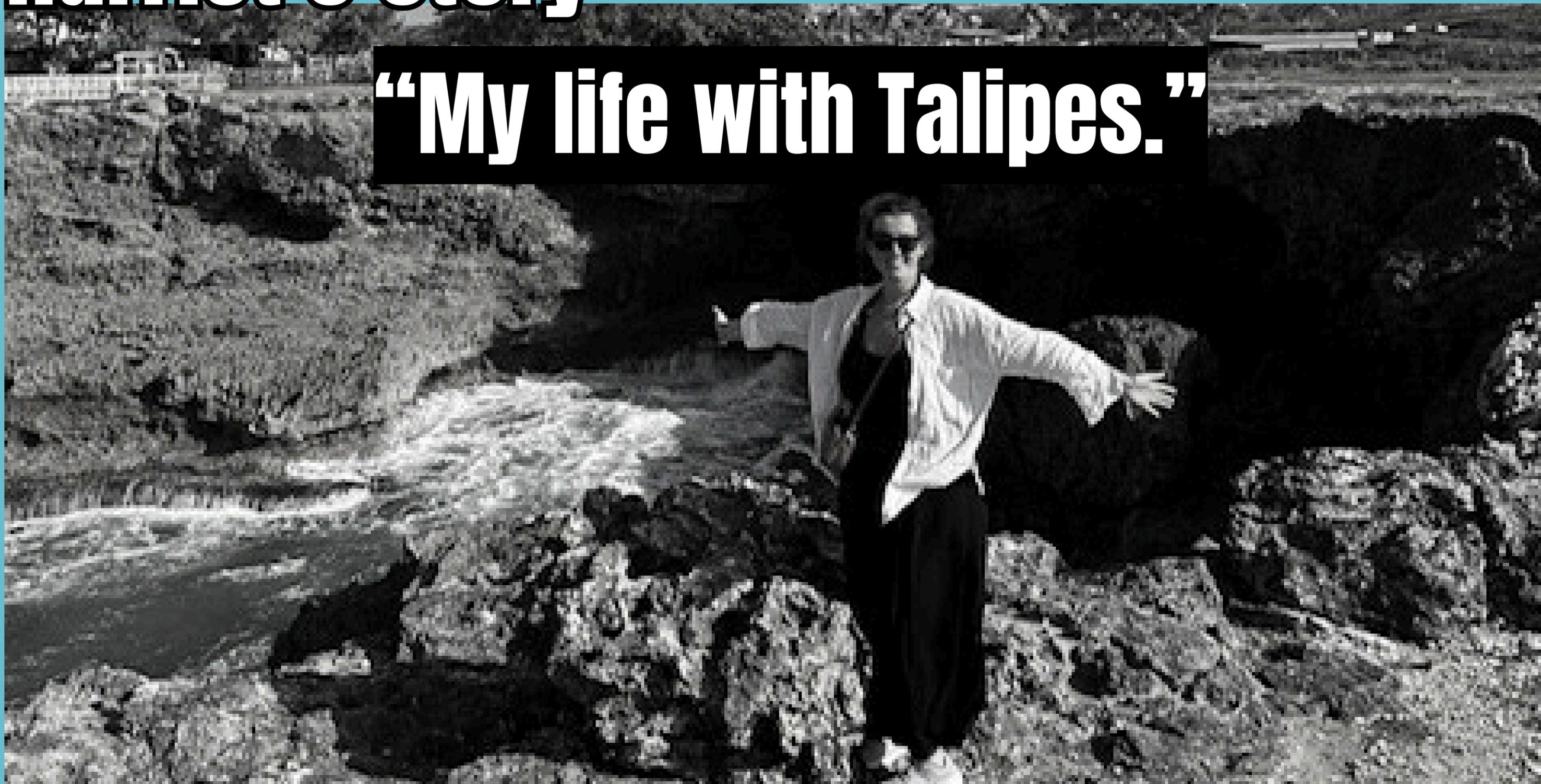


Harriet's story

“My life with Talipes.”



steps

We don't take walking for granted

My childhood diagnosis

- Diagnosed at 20 week scan
- 8 operations on each foot by 3 years old
- Daily physio given by mum
- Slept a lot due to energy of moving with clubfoot
- Very active

My mum knew that I had clubfoot from the 20 week scan.

I had 8 operations on each foot from almost new born to 3 years of age.

I had physio from my mum every night before bed until I went to uni, at 18 years old, and slept a lot because of the extra energy clubfoot takes.

I did ballet, swimming, hockey, violin, performing arts classes all out of school so was a very busy and active child despite significant clubfoot at birth.



My adult clubfoot experience

- Able to do everything, except run
- Always present
- Hasn't stopped her
- Last 5 years more difficult days

I'm fortunate that I don't think I would do anything differently in life if I didn't have clubfoot, other than wishing I could run for exercise and even then I have completed a 5K race for life!

There has never been a time where my life has not been impacted in some way by having clubfoot but, I have learnt to manage the symptoms and always keep doing what I want to do.

But, over the last 5 years I have noticed having more difficult days in terms of pain management and impact on mobility and finding my own way of managing has become more important.



KEEP GOING

What worked for me

Strength, core and Swimming

I have to make sure I do consistent strength and core training (i.e. building control and strength in the muscles of the trunk) as well as swimming now.



Moving even on painful days

I have noticed that even though it can feel counter intuitive to move on more painful days, the pain is less if I don't allow my body to stiffen up from lack of movement.



Adaptive gym class

I am fortunate that I have found a gym class which adapts exercises for me on my worse days meaning I can still attend the classes.



My life now

- **Clinical associate in psychology**
- **Happy relationship**
- **Enjoys many hobbies and socialising**



I have just qualified as a clinical associate in psychology.

I live happily in Cambridge with my partner, Harry.

I enjoy socialising, exercising, cooking, playing music and relaxing at home with family and friends.



Harriet's top tips

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- Even on bad days you are stronger than you might feel. Doing something to lift your spirits might positively change how you can manage your pain. Have a list of what small things bring you joy to turn to when things are tough. Even if the day starts feeling difficult you have the power to positively influence the rest of your day.
- Track your days. We are programmed to focus on the more difficult parts. Tracking can help us notice that there may have been glimmers of better or good even amidst the difficult moments. Think about what might have made those better moments better, or is there anything you could do again?
- Be kind to yourself. You are only human, and it's not always possible to be heroic and overcome the barriers that clubfoot can present.

Final thoughts: I have never known any different having been born with clubfoot.

The adjustment to living differently must be very difficult for those who have known life without clubfoot.

I hope my recommendations can still be helpful, but they may not be suitable for everyone.

How Steps helps



“The most helpful thing about discovering Steps was realising that everyone’s experiences are different and therefore it is okay for me to be creative and find what works for me. There are many different ways of managing clubfoot.”



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We don't take walking for granted

Visit www.stepsworldwide.org for more information on Clubfoot and how Steps can help

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With thanks to Harriet,
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