



Katharina Schroth's
three-dimensional scoliosis treatment

author Christa Lehnert-Schroth

How it all began...

Katharina Schroth (née Bauer) herself suffered from scoliosis in her youth.

Like all scoliotic patients she suffered from the psychological effects of this physical deformity. However, orthopaedic bracing failed to achieve the desired success and indeed inhibited physical activity.

At that time there were no appropriate treatment modalities for her condition. Katharina Schroth longed for nothing more than to achieve an upright posture and to be able to live without a brace. A rubber ball with a depression that could be pressed out when it was inflated with air gave her the seed of an idea and strengthened her resolve to modify her body using this principle.

The depression in the rubber ball may be likened to the concave side in scoliosis. This insight gave her the idea of also filling her concave body parts with air by "guiding" her breath into these areas.

A creative imagination, methodical thinking and persistent hard work soon brought initial success. By positioning mirrors so that she could exercise between them, she was able visually to monitor what was happening in her body.



In her case the rib hump was located centrally on the right side. In response to this specific breathing into the left side, the rib hump became simultaneously flattened. She noticed that there was therefore no hump at all, only torsioned ribs. These torsioned ribs were also restored to a normal position.

Scoliosis ceased to be an evitable fate and became a disease that could be combated (if not entirely cured) using suitable weapons.

One discovery led to another. Thus, for example, she detected a depressed area at the front of the ribcage, exactly opposite the posterior rib hump. She also succeeded in lifting this depressed area of her chest by breathing. At the same time she sensed how the rib hump on the right side at the back became flattened by itself. Therefore, when the front aspect was "put right", the back was "put right" simultaneously.

She still had a rib hump on the left side at the front. She was unable simply to press this in. However, it was reduced and became flattened when her breath had filled the concavity on the left side of her back. **This is how rotational breathing was discovered.**

Whenever something correct happened, corrections also automatically occurred in other body locations. Standing between two mirrors, she worked on herself with the most meticulous precision. Each minute area of unevenness was pondered over, sensed and ventilated.

At that time in her life she was already a teacher at Rackow's School of Business and Languages in Dresden. Her fellow teachers soon noticed the positive physical change in her. She was asked to give lectures on this subject: she prepared herself for these by a thorough study of anatomy and she allowed medical practitioners to test her knowledge.

The lectures were followed by courses in a wide variety of locations in Germany.

In 1921 **Katharina Schroth** set up practice in Meissen / Saxony. It was not long before she was treating



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scoliosis patients from Germany and abroad. Fired with tireless idealism, she worked hard on her patients.

From year to year fresh discoveries were made and the mosaic was built up piece by piece. In this way her method, which she called "Breathing Orthopaedics", was continually expanded. With each particular case she perfected her knowledge.

Soon she was invited to speak at one congress after another. As early as 1925 a reviewer for the *Medizinpolitische Rundschau* reported that the Schroth method had opened up a new era in the treatment of scoliosis.

Further information and illustrative material on this topic may be found in the German-language booklet: "Die Entwicklungsgeschichte der dreidimensionalen Skoliose-behandlung" [A History of the Development of Three-Dimensional Scoliosis Treatment].

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