The aim of this plan was to form a new habit of practicing yoga or yoga like stretching exercises for at least 30 minutes three times a week by end of this class. The significance of adopting this new behavior is undeniable as it relates to full range of motion in joints. Developing and maintaining full range of motion is important for everyone but in my case it has a direct correlation with how advanced my CMT has become or conversely how far have I been able to keep it at bay.

The baseline evaluation was an eye opening experience. It goes to show that one could keep an active lifestyle and yet neglect certain parts of one’s body. The additional weight also proved to be a limiting factor. In performing the stretching exercises during the past month I have seen dramatic improvements. Loosening up and stretching my back muscles improved first. My rag doll pose has improved to the point that I can touch the ground. However lengthening the shoulder muscles and thigh muscles have proven more difficult. The indicator poses, namely child pose and hand reach behind the back do not show noticeable improvements yet. These indicators show that more work needs to be done. The extra body weight I carry in my mid-section makes the child pose uncomfortable. Also many years of compensating for the weak lower limbs with my upper body has made my arms and shoulders strong but inflexible.

Introduction to yoga has caused a paradigm shift in my understanding of my body’s limitations as well as its potentials. I aim to make this a permanent part of my fitness plan. There is virtually no cost related to practicing yoga other than time. So I have added 30 minutes of it to my daily fitness plan for the coming year. Additionally, I want to take this opportunity to study the effects of yoga stretches on small scale alongside of the other more generally demonstrated larger muscle groups. Previously my best tool in fighting against CMT has been long distance bicycling. Pushing down on the pedal without the benefit of strong ankle muscles has cause hammered toes which are exasperated by the fact that I have very little sensory nerves in my toes. The biomedical answer to this condition is to surgically lengthen the tendons under my toes or to fuse the bones in each toe with a screw. I want to try to reverse this condition without surgery. This will be a case of using yoga like stretching exercises on a small scale.

My fitness plan for the coming year includes 30 minutes of daily stretching exercises. At the end of these sessions I am going to make an explicit effort to push and stretch my toes. If anything the practices of the past month proved the value of establishing a routine. The daily shoeless practice of yoga will continue to be a great routine to help with my toes.

My takeaway from this exercise was the confidence that improvements, however slow, are achievable without invasive surgeries. Yoga proved a valuable tool and I feel that it is no longer an odd and obscure idea. Modified positions allows for safe and gradual incorporation of individual poses which is all that a person in my position could ask for.