

StrokeNews

SPRING 2015

For everyone affected by stroke

stroke.org.uk

Step out this spring

Vera gets back on her feet
and steps out for stroke at 80

**The benefits of
being active**

Tips to get you started

Money matters

Planning your finances

**Action on Stroke
Month is coming**

Make May Purple for Stroke

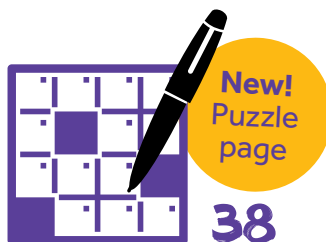
Stroke
association

step

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Stroke Helpline

Call confidentially
on **0303 3033 100**



Life After Stroke Services

Find support in your area
at **stroke.org.uk/support**



Clubs and groups

provide a lifeline to stroke
survivors and carers



Free factsheets

guide you through all aspects of
stroke. See **stroke.org.uk/shop**



TalkStroke and befriending

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by stroke online or in person.
See **stroke.org.uk**



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Design **fullyfledgeddesign.com**

Stroke News is published by the **Stroke Association**,
240 City Road, London EC1V 2PR.

stroke.org.uk

Helpline **0303 3033 100 / info@stroke.org.uk**

To advertise in *Stroke News*, call Redactive Media
Group on 020 7880 7613.

Volume 33.1 Spring 2015 © Stroke Association 2015

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Stroke News is printed on paper from sustainable sources.

The Stroke Association is registered as a charity in England and Wales (No 211015) and in Scotland (SC037789). Also registered in Northern Ireland (XT33805), Isle of Man (No 945) and Jersey (NPO 369).

Welcome...

Since your last edition, I've been out and about listening to readers' feedback. Readers told me a smaller version of *Stroke News* was easier to handle with one hand, the articles looked more digestible and it can be read on-the-go. A smaller format also saves the charity money in postage; so we've had a makeover!

You'll notice the writing is the same size and we've got all our usual articles – plus some new ones, like a puzzle page (page 38). I hope you like the new look.

In this edition, we look at the benefits of being active. Did you know 30 minutes of exercise five times a week can reduce your stroke risk by a quarter? We know it's not always easy to exercise, especially after a stroke, so we've

got some tips to get you started, including chair-based exercises (page 27).

If you're looking for inspiration to get active, read Vera Kelly's story (page 9) of getting back on her feet, aged 80.

I hope you enjoy this edition.

Alex Bolton
Editor



Can you help?

We're facing increasing costs to produce and send *Stroke News* to you for free.

Stroke News is a lifeline to thousands of people affected by stroke and we'd like to continue making it available to everyone who benefits from it.

If you can help, please donate at stroke.org.uk/strokenews-donate or call **01604 687 777**. As a charity, we rely on your support.

Thank you.



Your views

Over to you



'Hot topics', *Stroke News* winter 2014, reminds me of Edwina Curry's advice to wear more jumpers in the 1980s. The elephant in the room is surely high heating costs which many thousands cannot afford.


 **Mr Howells**

You're right. Our Short-changed by stroke report found more than 60% of stroke survivors are in fuel poverty and 40% cut back on food. We're pushing home concerns to policy makers and will keep readers updated.

*In the meantime, it's important you're getting all the help available. Check with your electricity supplier if they're part of the Warm Home Discount Scheme or call the Citizen's Advice Consumer Helpline on **03454 040 506**.*

Editor

Readers' tips

 My stroke happened 20 years ago, leaving me unable to write. Having been a draughtsman that prided himself on clear drawing, it was particularly distressing. Forcing myself to copy pieces from the daily paper helped and discovering using a craft mat under the paper gave me easy writing motion with sufficient control.

 **Ian Mayne**

I had strokes in 1969 and 1971 which left me with left side partial paralysis but I worked for 30 years commuting from Chatham to London. I have also travelled widely. I know strokes affect people differently but I always try to adopt a positive outlook and I believe while there is life there is hope.

 **James Whiteoak**

Do you have a tip or something to share?

Write to us at *Stroke News*, Stroke Association House, 240 City Road, London, EC1V 2PR or email strokenews@stroke.org.uk



Hot topics

→ Do you have a repeat prescription?

The new Electronic Prescription Service means you no longer have to visit your GP practice every time you need to pick up your paper prescription. Instead, your GP will send the prescription electronically to the place you choose, saving you time.

For more information see hscic.gov.uk/epspatients

→ Care calculator

The BBC has launched an online guide to the care system for the over-65s. You can submit your postcode and find out how much care services cost in your area.

See <http://bbc.in/1v1PZFm>



With the general election round the corner, it's the perfect time to raise awareness of stroke with your local candidates.

Find out our calls to action on stroke for the next Government at stroke.org.uk/TWCCS

Action on Stroke Month

Make May Purple for Stroke

A stroke strikes every three and a half minutes in the UK. So, this May, we're asking you to join us to *Make May Purple for Stroke* and bring together communities to have fun, go purple and raise vital funds to conquer stroke.



Wear it, knit it, bake it or paint it purple...
Together we can conquer stroke



Want to get involved?

Get your action pack at stroke.org.uk/strokemonth and check pages 7 and 8 for more ideas.

 [@TheStrokeAssoc](https://twitter.com/TheStrokeAssoc)
[#MakeMayPurple](https://twitter.com/MakeMayPurple)





Bake it purple

Oliver Archer had a difficult start in life. He had a stroke while his mum was in labour which left him with significant brain damage.

Oliver spent seven days in a neonatal unit; his outlook looked very uncertain. But, after a year of intensive hospital visits and physiotherapy, Oliver began to talk like any other baby and amazed his family with his remarkable recovery.

Oliver loves nothing more than baking with his sister. In fact, baking's taken his whole family on a journey. They've released two cook books to raise money for the Stroke Association and West Suffolk hospital, where Oliver was treated. They're packed with his favourite recipes and are written from his perspective.



Bake it purple and help conquer stroke

➔ Cooking is a great way to relax, improve concentration and boost confidence.

➔ Why not hold a purple cake sale at your local school, stroke club or in your office?

➔ Get your magazine and send your purple pictures to strokemonth@stroke.org.uk

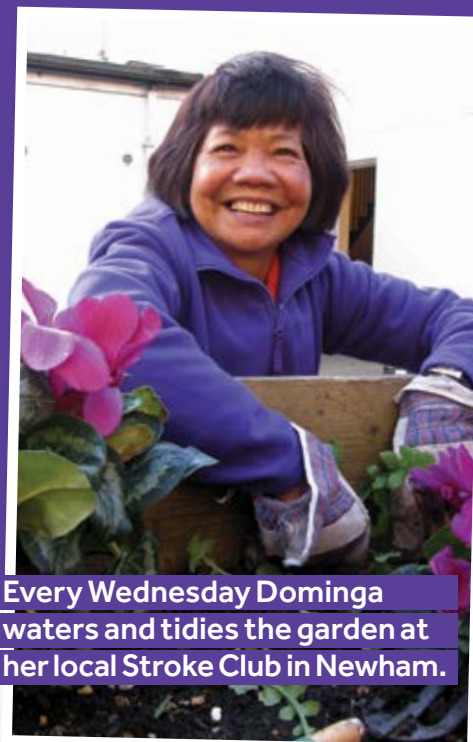


Grow it purple

Dominga Farmer, 68, had a stroke in 2003. She collapsed at work and was rushed to hospital. The stroke left her exhausted. She wasn't able to work again.

Dominga has slowed down more in the last few years and her movement's become more limited. She had to have a pacemaker fitted two years ago. But she hasn't let her health stop her enjoying her old hobby – getting out and being active in the garden.

"I've always loved gardening and get so much satisfaction from growing my own vegetables and herbs to eat. When I get tired, I make a cup of tea, have a rest and get back into the garden when I'm feeling up to it."



Every Wednesday Dominga waters and tidies the garden at her local Stroke Club in Newham.

Grow it purple and help conquer stroke

➔ Gardening can be physically and mentally therapeutic.

➔ Put up the bunting and invite your friends round for a purple garden party. Or grow and sell some purple fruit and veg.

➔ Get in touch for fundraising and seasonal growing tips and send your purple pictures to strokemonth@stroke.org.uk

Stepping out at 80

Vera Kelly from Cheshire is living proof that no matter what life throws at you, you should never stop fighting. Just 18 months after a stroke left her unable to walk, Vera took part in one of our *Step out for Stroke* events.

Hearing the words 'you might never walk again'

When Vera had a stroke at 79, she was told she would probably never walk again. One side of her body was almost completely paralysed. The only movement she had on her left side was in her hand. She squeezed everyone's hand as tight as she could to show she was still in there – and to tell them not to give up, because she wasn't.

"It was awful lying in hospital praying I'd be able to walk again," said Vera. "Before I had a stroke, I walked and rode my bike every day. I remember thinking, there's no way I am staying in bed – I'm going to fight this."

Getting back on her feet

Vera began pushing herself the moment she was out of intensive care. She played the card game 'Patience' every day for mental and physical stimulation. It took extreme effort and concentration to hold the cards. It was frustrating and she struggled to accept that she couldn't do the things that she used to do.

But, Vera remained determined and bit by bit her movement came back.

"The physiotherapists were marvelous. I got tired easily, but with mental, core and walking exercises, they pushed me to regain strength in my left side. Within three weeks, I could walk short distances with a stick.

"My daughter broke down at the sight of me walking."

"I remember the first time I walked without a stick. I copied the physiotherapist in front, training my brain to relearn a normal walking pattern.

"My daughter came to visit and broke down in tears at the sight of me walking. I felt like I was powerwalking or running down the ward! It was such a relief." ▶



Stepping out for stroke

"When I left hospital two months later I could walk 100 yards. But it felt like 500 miles. I had to lie down for half an hour afterwards. When my stroke coordinator Jane told me about *Step out for Stroke*, it seemed a brilliant way to keep me motivated and show myself how far I'd come.

"The day was very special, and managing to walk two and a half miles with my granddaughter topped it off. I was over the moon. Our friends and family supported us along the way and we raised more than £350 for the Stroke Association to give back for the support I've had."



Vera raised £350 to give back for the support from her stroke coordinator Jane

In 2014, *Step out for Stroke* raised more than £150,000 to help conquer stroke.

We have 50 events planned across the UK in 2015, mostly in May. They're open to everyone, whatever your walking ability. All events have wheelchair access and are a fun day out for the whole family.

Find an event near you at stroke.org.uk/stepout



Stroke
association

Step Out for Stroke®

Walk with us and together we can conquer stroke



Every step makes a difference
Enter now stroke.org.uk/stepout
Telephone 029 2052 4426

f t #StepOut

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Lydon 1 – 0 Stroke

“When I crossed the finish line I dropped to the floor full of emotion.”

When personal trainer John-Lee Lydon from Tyne & Wear had a stroke aged 30, he made a goal to get back on his feet and run a half marathon in aid of the Stroke Association.

The doctors discovered John-Lee’s stroke was triggered by a hole in his heart (known as a PFO). “I thought I was bullet-proof but I could no longer do the simplest things like open a bottle with my left hand or balance on my left foot – I looked like Bambi on ice,” said John-Lee.

“I started to walk round the block with my wife. A two minute walk took 20 minutes. But, over time, I got stronger. I had a long journey ahead adapting to fatigue, medication and heart surgery. But I was determined to run the Great North Run.

“Finishing filled me with confidence. I thought ‘I’ve come so far: Lydon 1 – 0 stroke.’”



Our Great North Run runners raised £180,000 to help conquer stroke last year. To get your place this September visit stroke.org.uk/greatnorthrun or call 0191 492 6191.

Together we can conquer stroke

We rely on your support to prevent stroke and change lives. A huge thanks to everyone who's gone the extra mile to fundraise, volunteer and campaign for us.



Gaynor Brotherton held a *Sip for Stroke* event raising more than £200 after her dad had two strokes. To hold your own event, visit stroke.org.uk/sip



Our Resolution runners have been amazing, raising more than £200,000 in 2014. To find a 5, 10 or 15km event near you, visit stroke.org.uk/resolution



More than 2,000 cyclists took on the Thames Bridges Bike Ride last year raising £200,000. Register for this year's event (10 May) at stroke.org.uk/tbbr

How does your donation help?

£5 could help 15 people begin to come to terms with the effects of stroke with crucial factsheets.

£20 could support our Stroke Helpline to give life-changing advice to people struggling to cope.

£50 could help us continue to invest in research which prevents stroke and improves the lives of stroke survivors.

Stroke stars

Julie had three strokes in her early 30s which left her housebound for six years. Her life changed in 2008 when she attended one of our voluntary support groups. Now Chair of the group, Julie is a passionate Stroke Ambassador, raising vital awareness of stroke. With increased confidence, Julie attended the first ever UK Stroke Assembly in 2011. She has returned every year since and now helps plan the event.



"I've learnt a lot from the talks and workshops which I can take back and share with our group." Find out more about the Assembly on page 35.



Check out what events are coming up soon on page 40 or see stroke.org.uk/fundraise

Exercise after stroke

If you haven't been active for some time, knowing where to start can be tough, especially if you have reduced mobility or tire more easily after a stroke. But it's never too late to start.



Just 30 minutes of activity five days a week can reduce your stroke risk by a quarter.

- It lowers blood pressure.
- It improves your mood.
- It reduces your risk of other conditions like type 2 diabetes and heart disease.

Where to get started

- 1 Talk to your GP. Certain medication, like beta-blockers or sedatives, can reduce your ability to exercise.
- 2 Find a 'fitness buddy'. Exercising with someone else is amazing motivation. Either another stroke survivor from a local group with similar abilities or a friend or relative.
- 3 Start slowly and build up.

Stroke survivor Pete Rumbold is now an ARNI Stroke Rehab Instructor.



Pete was paralysed on one side and unable to see, swallow or speak after a stroke in 2011. When he left hospital after six weeks, he was determined his rehabilitation wouldn't stop there. He devised a fitness programme at home until he could go to the gym. He's now helping other stroke survivors at our Life After Stroke Centre in Bromsgrove.

Pete's top exercise tips

- 1 30 minutes a day might sound a lot but it doesn't have to be in one go. Try working 10 minute blocks into your day, such as a short walk to the shops or doing some gardening.
- 2 Do day-to-day tasks using your weaker side, like cleaning your teeth, brushing your hair and eating. Involving your weaker side can help your brain relearn tasks.
- 3 If you're less mobile, try chair-based exercises. See page 27.
- 4 If you're used to exercise, do a mixture of cardiovascular exercise and strength training at a gym. Making your heart, lungs and good side stronger will have an amazing effect on your weaker side.
- 5 Going to a gym can be daunting. Ask "what's your quietest time?" Try contacting ARNI rehab so a local instructor can guide you through the first sessions and set a programme designed for you.

Find out more

- Read our *Exercise and stroke* factsheet: stroke.org.uk/exercise
- Find out about ARNI rehab: arni.uk.com

Tackling fatigue after stroke

Stroke Association-funded research is paving the way for new treatments for fatigue after stroke – one of the least understood but most common effects of stroke.

While exercise and hobbies are good for our health, for many stroke survivors, the impacts of stroke can make these hard. Fatigue after stroke can make you feel you lack energy or strength and feel constantly tired. It's different to typical tiredness because it doesn't always improve with rest. And because the intensity of the tiredness doesn't seem to be related to the severity or type of stroke, it's very hard to treat.

Finding a solution

We're funding Dr Anna Kuppuswamy to find out exactly what's happening to someone's brain when they experience fatigue because of stroke.



"A large proportion of stroke survivors complain they feel 'tired'."

"A large proportion of stroke survivors complain they feel 'tired'," Dr Kuppuswamy said. "We know fatigue is experienced due to a combination of changes in the muscle and in the brain regions that control the muscles. I'm testing the idea that fatigue after stroke is due only to changes within the brain regions controlling the muscles."

Dr Kuppuswamy has been working with a pioneering research tool called transcranial magnetic stimulation (TMS). This delivers a safe, magnetic pulse to the regions of the brain that control the muscles. She measured the response of patients' brains and nervous system to these pulses.

The UK Stroke Forum

Dr Kuppuswamy's research was one of hundreds of projects presented at the largest event focusing on stroke in the UK.

More than 1,300 stroke care professionals and people affected by stroke came together at the Forum. Many of the projects were based on the views and concerns of stroke survivors and carers raised at the UK Stroke Assembly earlier in the year, providing the driving force behind shaping services and standards of care.



To find out more, see ukstrokeforum.org

Although the research is at an early stage, it lays important foundations which could help discover future treatments for stroke patients with fatigue.

Our research

The research we fund saves lives and helps stroke survivors make their best possible recovery. We can only do this thanks to voluntary donations.

If you can help us conquer stroke sooner, please visit stroke.org.uk/donate



Planning a summer holiday?



When a stroke left Andrew Davies from Carmarthenshire in Wales disabled at 45, he wasn't going to let it stand in his way of holidays with his wife and daughter. He's continued to travel extensively and shares his tips for disabled travellers.

1 Shop around for travel insurance and make sure you're adequately covered. You must declare you've had a stroke.

2 It's sensible to get the all-clear from your doctor before flying. Before parting with any money, check the airline can accommodate your disability, what assistance is available at both ends of the flight and what you can carry on-board. Most airlines will carry two items of mobility equipment for free, but larger items, such as wheelchairs, need to be checked in.

3 UK train companies offer assistance to elderly and disabled passengers at all staffed stations. Most require 24 hours' notice but, once booked, your journey is taken care of – including help moving luggage, assistance on and off the train, and getting around the station.

4 There's lots of accommodation to suit accessibility needs. Many places have electric hoists, electric beds and wet rooms and there are resorts and packages tailor-made for people with a disability.



Our factsheet *Holidays after stroke* lists lots of organisations that can help plan your trip: stroke.org.uk/holiday

Pack some peace of mind



"I want to live my life after stroke to the full and you're enabling me to do that - I'm very impressed, it's a first class service!" Doreen

Stroke Association Insurance Services has helped many people source travel insurance, including Doreen. All policies are individually assessed and subject to terms and conditions, dependent on medical conditions

declared, destination and duration of your trip. We can't promise to be the cheapest, but we are comprehensive. We will always include all medical conditions declared in one call when we quote for your policy.

Call **0800 519 0759** or visit stroke.org.uk/insurance to find out more and for no obligation quotations.

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Making daily life easier

Whether you need help bathing, getting around or cooking, aids and adaptations can make everyday tasks easier.

Liz Jenkins from our Stroke Helpline answers the questions she's often asked.



**Call our Stroke Helpline on
0303 3033 100**

How do I access daily living equipment?

Before you leave hospital, an assessment should be done to find out if you need aids and adaptations. This may involve an occupational therapist or physiotherapist visiting your home. If you need equipment, it should be provided by the time you leave hospital.

If you get home and find you need aids and adaptations, contact your local council and ask for adult social care. They'll arrange an assessment of your care support needs.

Do I have to pay?

Most equipment will be loaned to you for free by the NHS or your local council, for as long as it's needed. Any adaptations to your home which cost less than £1,000 (including fitting costs) will also be carried out for free. Major adaptations are not covered. However, help from adult social care is means-tested and you might be eligible for a grant.

Where can I find aids and adaptations?

Find what equipment could best suit your needs on Equip Stroke: **asksara.dlf.org.uk** or your nearest mobility centre: **assist-uk.org/** **centre-details** or see our factsheet at **stroke.org.uk/equipment**

Can you spot the signs of stroke?



Facial
weakness



Arm
weakness



Speech
problems



Time
to call 999



Since the Stroke Association designed the FAST test, more than 38,000 people have got to hospital sooner, saving more lives.

Do your friends and family know the FAST test? Help make them FAST aware.



Stroke strikes every
3 ½ minutes in the UK.



Around four in five people will have one or more FAST symptoms when having a stroke. Other symptoms include sudden loss of vision or blurred vision, sudden weakness on one side and sudden memory loss.



The first three hours after a stroke are critical in limiting the impact on the brain.

Two of us

"The first time I met my stroke coordinator, Jane, I was lying in hospital, completely unable to move. I couldn't even swallow. From that moment, she's been my hero."

David McCartney

When David had a stroke at 47, his life changed completely. A third of his skull had to be removed because his brain had swollen so much. He couldn't walk and even simple things like talking on the phone and filling in forms, were impossible.

"Before the stroke I loved my job, dancing, keeping fit and gardening. But when I left hospital, I was sleeping in a hospital bed in my kitchen. I had to hoist myself out of bed into my wheelchair, but the doors in the house weren't wide enough to get around.

"Jane helped me manage the practical issues I faced at home. She helped me fill in forms so I could get a blue badge and financial help – it's a huge thing

**"From that moment,
she's been my hero."**

because I got tired so easily and struggled to concentrate.

"When she found out it could take up to two years before my house could be adapted, she applied for me to take part in the BBC's DIY SOS and we were successful. It transformed my life – they put ramps in my home so I can use an electric wheelchair, widened the doors and installed a wet room. I can get about the house in the blink of an eye.

"But Jane's also been an emotional support. When my Dad died after I had a stroke, Jane was my rock. She lifted my spirits and kept me motivated through the whole journey." ▶



Image © Warrington Guardian

Jane Guy

"I've never met anyone with as much get up and go as David. It brings a smile to my face because he could have easily sat back and let it beat him, but he didn't.

"My role as a Family and Carer Support Coordinator at the Stroke Association means I support stroke survivors and their families every day on the hospital ward. I follow up with them once they're home. David really struck a chord with me. He was so young with so much life ahead of him.

"Having to give up work as an electrician after 32 years really knocked his confidence. But in the last two years, he hasn't missed a session at his local Stroke Association voluntary group. Getting out of the house and making friends has done wonders for his confidence and independence.

"I think the proudest moment was seeing him take part in a *Step out for Stroke* event. He went round the course in his wheelchair but he stood up and did the last few steps over the finish line. It was an amazing achievement."

Did you know?

Every day we help thousands of people like David.

70,000 The number of people our Life After Stroke services supported last year.

340 The number of our coordinators helping with everything from communication problems to the emotional impact of stroke.

Can you help give more stroke survivors access to a coordinator like Jane?

With **152,000** strokes a year in the UK, we're only able to help around half of those affected. By supporting our services, you're helping more stroke survivors on their journey of recovery. To donate call **0300 3300 740** or visit **stroke.org.uk/David**



Keeping active if you're less mobile

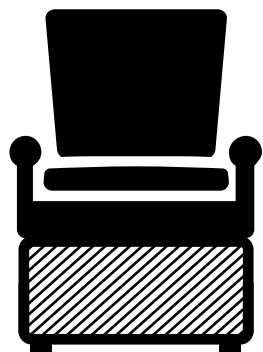
Around 80% of stroke survivors experience mobility problems. But if you're less mobile, exercise doesn't have to be out of the question. Try chair-based exercises at home or at your local leisure centre.

Workout time 10 minutes + 5 minutes warm up and 5 minutes cool down.



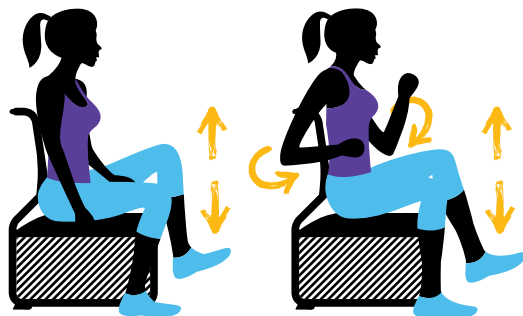
Getting started

- 1 Use a sturdy chair.
- 2 Start by warming up - gently rotate and stretch your joints working from the neck down for five minutes.
- 3 Remember, you're the best judge of what you can manage.



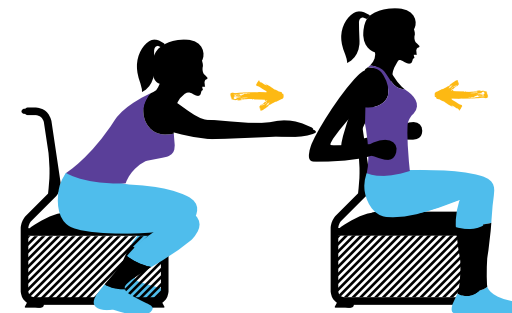
1 Marching

- Sit tall and tuck your tummy in.
- March your feet. Playing music can help with rhythm. (2 minutes).
- March your feet and arms (2 minutes).



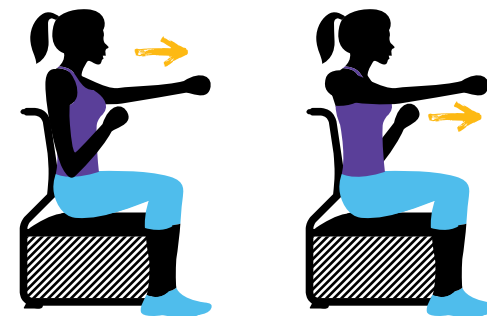
2 Rowing

- Push your arms forward bending at the waist.
- Straighten up pushing your arms back as if you're rowing a boat (2 minutes).



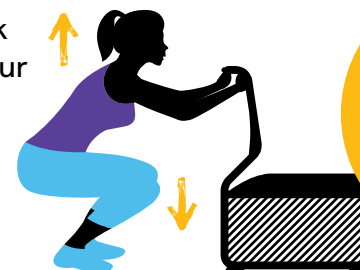
3 Boxing

- Throw combination punches (two left jabs/two right jabs) (2 minutes).



4 Squats

- Stand and hold the back of the chair and bend your knees (go down as far as you comfortably can) (10 repetitions. Have a break and do 10 more).



To finish
Repeat the warm up for five minutes as a cool down.

Problems with swallowing after stroke



Almost half of stroke survivors have difficulty swallowing in the first few weeks after a stroke. Swallowing problems can be very serious. But, only a small number of people have problems that last longer than a few weeks and there are things that can help.



Talk to your Speech and Language Therapist (SLT)

– they will assess you when you arrive in hospital and explain what you can safely eat. If, in time, you feel your problems have improved, ask your SLT or GP for another assessment.



Change how you eat – eating small amounts through the day may be better than three big meals. Hot food and drinks can be harder to swallow so allow them to cool. You can also thicken your drinks and try pureed or softer foods.



Keep your mouth and teeth healthy

– swallowing problems can cause food to get stuck in your cheeks and around your gums leading to infection.



Tube feeding

– if you're not getting enough food or water you may need to be fed liquid food directly into your digestive system. This can be done at home and you'll be supported with how to do it.

For more advice, see our factsheet at stroke.org.uk/swallowing-problems



Did you know?

Stroke Association-funded research led to swallowing assessments taking place within 72 hours of hospital admission, as standard, so that fewer survivors risk inhaling liquids and food.



Caring towards the end of life

Caring for someone at the end of their life is one of the hardest things to do. But understanding their wishes and getting the right support, can help. Stan Taylor from Dundee, Scotland, tells us how he coped with caring for, and losing, his wife of 50 years.



Becoming a carer overnight

When Stan's wife Jeanne had a stroke, her life changed forever. And so did Stan's. With no training, qualifications or confidence in how he'd cope, Stan became Jeanne's full-time carer for the next seven years. He cared for her through two further strokes, until she went into a care home. Sadly, Jeanne died in 2011 after a suspected third stroke. It was just six weeks after their 50th wedding anniversary.

Coping as a carer

"Caring for Jeanne put a strain on our relationship. Jeanne couldn't speak properly again after the stroke. Sometimes it would be a matter of days before I had a 'light bulb moment' and realised what she was trying to say. She became increasingly dependent but was proud and unwilling to accept outside help. I felt she saw me as a robot at times; I never got tired and I never felt ill.

"I did the best I could; we got out and about and maintained a sense of humour but it wasn't until six months after Jeanne's first stroke that I realised there was support available when I saw a poster in the chemist. Three years passed



"Jeanne and I were quite organised and dealt with some practicalities long before she became unwell."

before I had a Carer's Assessment. It was this support that helped me cope.

"Thanks to respite breaks and a short break service, as well as medication I was prescribed for mild depression, I coped better. I visited family and friends, did a computer course or went to the gym for an hour or two a week. It helped me get over the sensation of overwhelming fatigue."

Understanding Jeanne's wishes: difficult conversations

When you're close to someone for so long, it's easy to assume you know their wishes. But, it's never too soon to put plans in place for the future.

"Jeanne and I were quite organised and dealt with some practicalities long before she became unwell. We'd talked about burial wishes, written wills and registered a Power of Attorney. ▶

“Having cared for her, I felt a loss of purpose.”

When Jeanne became unwell it helped that legally I could act on her behalf and handle day-to-day things like finances.

“What we hadn’t discussed is what might happen if one of us became mentally incapacitated or what we should do in the need for resuscitation – these are difficult conversations. Sadly, we left it too late and Jeanne was too unwell to understand.

Dealing with loss

“I think I started grieving when Jeanne had her first stroke in 2002. I spent nine years coming to terms with the loss of the love of my life, but it was still a shock

when she died. Having cared for her, I felt a loss of purpose.

Finding purpose through volunteering

“I found volunteering enormously helpful. I find it cathartic to talk about Jeanne and rewarding to share my knowledge to help others.”

Stan will be turning 80 this year, and he remains passionate about volunteering for the Stroke Association. He helps raise awareness of stroke in his local community and plays a key part in coordinating and delivering weekly activities for stroke survivors.



Putting plans in place for the future

For advice, see page 33



Carer support or dealing with bereavement

Our Stroke Helpline is here for you: **0303 3033 100**.

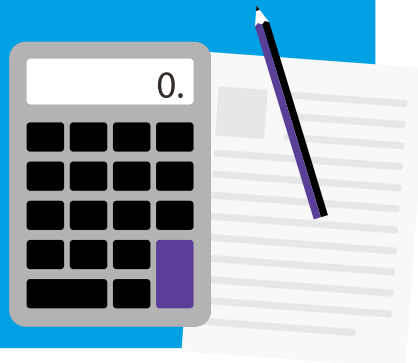


Could your experience help others?

The Stroke Association is planning to raise awareness of end of life care and improve the information we produce. You can shape our work. Please get in touch: **feedback@stroke.org.uk**

Money matters

Financial planning is easy to put off, but what would happen if you could no longer write your name or remember your PIN number to access your bank account?



Here are some things to consider when planning for the future:

1. A Lasting Power of Attorney (LPA)

- is a legal way to allow someone you trust to make financial decisions on your behalf, even if you lose mental capacity.
- It costs £110 to register an Attorney (maybe less if you're on a low income).
- You don't need a solicitor, but if you want a solicitor's advice, this costs extra. Fees vary, so get a number of quotes.
- Arrange an LPA at gov.uk/lasting-power-of-attorney or ask the Office of the Public Guardian (**0300 456 0300**) to post a form to you.

2. An advance statement

- outlines your wishes, values and beliefs to help guide anyone making decisions for you if you lose the capacity to make or communicate them.
- It considers practical things like where you would like to be cared for.

3. An advance decision

- lets family, carers and health professionals know whether you want to refuse specific treatments in the future if you're unable to make or communicate those decisions yourself.
- It's legally binding.
- Find out more at <http://bit.ly/1MA34ex>

Financial planning information varies across the UK. Call our Stroke Helpline (**0303 3033 100**) to find out what's accurate in your area.



4. Writing and registering a will

- allows you to choose what happens to your money and possessions when you die.
- It's the safest way to look after the people and causes you care about in the future.
- If you're 60 or over, or a stroke survivor of any age, The Stroke Association's Free Will Scheme can help you through the process and put you in touch with a local solicitor.
- Call **020 7566 1505** or email legacy@stroke.org.uk for a free will pack.



Have you thought about leaving a gift in your will?

Leaving a gift to the Stroke Association will play a crucial role in helping to conquer stroke for good. For more information contact **020 7566 1505**.



The UK Stroke Assembly

Share your hopes and concerns

For many people, life after stroke is very different to their former life. The UK Stroke Assembly lets you share your hopes and concerns, hear developments in stroke care and research and try something new, so that together, we can take action on stroke.

The Assembly is tailored to the needs of stroke survivors and carers and the things that matter to you. Your voice helps influence Stroke Association campaigns and is shared with stroke professionals at the UK Stroke Forum to create change for everyone affected by stroke.



Try something new and learn new skills



Learn about developments in stroke research

"Meeting so many stroke survivors in one place was a great reassurance. It's really nice to know you're doing great and you're not alone."

"I felt so inspired after hearing about fatigue research that I spoke to my GP and got involved in a research project. It's given me a focus and helped my rehabilitation." John



Discover products and services

Fact file

- 2015 will be the fifth UK Stroke Assembly.
- It's hosted by the Stroke Association in partnership with other stroke organisations.
- Feedback from the Assembly helped inform our *Feeling overwhelmed* report about the emotional impact of stroke.
- Talks and workshops offer practical advice by inspirational speakers.



Book before 1 May 2015

Book now to be at the next UK Stroke Assembly on 9 and 10 June 2015 in Nottingham.



For full details of this year's event, see strokeassembly.org.uk or call **01527 903 930**.



#strokeassembly

Atrial fibrillation

David Derrett's stroke was triggered by a condition he had no idea he had, but which put him at five times greater risk of having a stroke.

It was only in hospital after a stroke that he was diagnosed with atrial fibrillation (AF). He'd never experienced any symptoms. The stroke virtually paralysed David's left hand side and he had to stop working as a Managing Director for an engineering firm at 62.

He now takes medication to manage the condition and reduce his risk of having a further stroke.

What is AF?

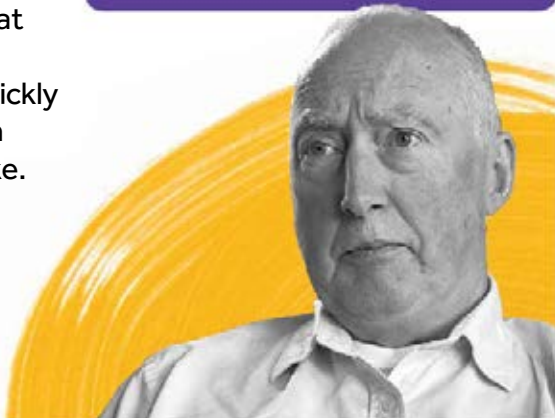
- AF is the most common type of irregular heartbeat.
- It can cause the heart to beat up to 140 times a minute.
- Because blood can't move quickly or smoothly, blood clots can form which can lead to stroke.
- AF-related strokes are avoidable if the condition is diagnosed and managed.
- Strokes due to AF are often more severe.

What are the symptoms?

- Palpitations
- Breathlessness
- Chest pain
- Fatigue
- No symptoms but an irregular pulse over one minute.

A proper diagnosis is only possible through an ECG so if you think you have any of these symptoms see your doctor as soon as possible.

See our factsheet at stroke.org.uk/atrialfibrillation

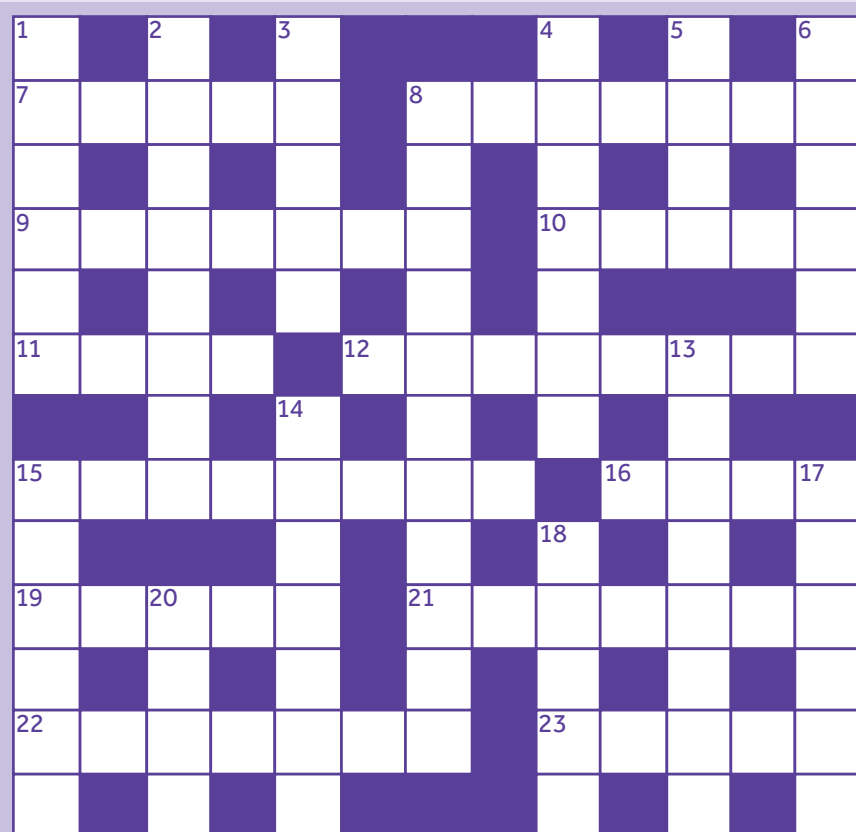


Puzzle

Pages

Solutions
See page 40
for the puzzle
solutions.

Puzzles can be a fun way to exercise your mind and improve memory, concentration and understanding.



With thanks to The Times/News Syndication who granted us rights to this crossword.

Across

- 7 Not dead (5)
- 8 Bishop's district (7)
- 9 Synthetic material (7)
- 10 Demonstrate by evidence (5)
- 11 Conservative (4)
- 12 Tip (to waiter) (8)
- 15 Open space in a forest (8)
- 16 Monarch (4)
- 19 Fire-raiser's crime (5)
- 21 Give rise to; breath in (7)
- 22 Written law (7)
- 23 Eat grass; scrape (skin) (5)

Down

- 1 Floor covering (6)
- 2 Differ in opinion (8)
- 3 Profundity (5)
- 4 Reckon, calculate (7)
- 5 Nothing (4)
- 6 Unorthodox belief (6)
- 8 Seeking to impose a view (11)
- 13 Hostile (8)
- 14 Braincase (7)
- 15 Separate item in contract (6)
- 17 Hansel's sister (6)
- 18 Habitual practice (5)
- 20 Box; mineral; pole (4)

Word search

R B B W I W P E
E A F D Q U X E
U K S L R E I K
Q E S P R C X O
N H L C U X M R
O E I U X Z G T
C S X F A S T S
E H O L I D A Y

BAKE
CONQUER
EXERCISE
FAST
HOLIDAY
PURPLE
STROKE

