

## Leisure activities after stroke

Our leisure time is valuable, and taking part in hobbies and interests is an important part of life after stroke. You may want to return to interests you enjoyed before, or try out some new ones. This guide lists ideas for you to try, and has details of resources and organisations you may find helpful.

After a stroke, it may not be as easy to do the things you did before, but it's not impossible. There are lots of things out there that can help you continue to enjoy hobbies and other activities. These include adaptations and specialist equipment, organisations offering advice, and local groups that you can join.

If you need more help with the effects of a stroke, such as therapy to help you with speaking, walking, or activities like cooking, speak to your specialist stroke nurse or visit your GP. For more information on getting the support you need, contact our Helpline on **0303 3033 100**.

Interested in exercise or sport? Our guide R07, *Exercise and stroke* has lots of ideas about being active, even if you've got mobility or muscle problems. It also has information about organisations that help people with disabilities take part in sports. Read it online at [stroke.org.uk](https://stroke.org.uk).

### Looking for ways to spend your leisure time?

Here are some suggestions:

- **animals** – keeping a pet, birdwatching
- **art and crafts** – drawing, painting, pottery, making models or cards
- **cinema or theatre**
- **cooking** – trying new recipes, baking, cake decorating
- **days out** – visiting art galleries, museums or historic buildings
- **gardening**
- **music** – listening to music, playing an instrument or going to concerts
- **photography** – taking photos or visiting exhibitions
- **puzzles and games** – jigsaws, crosswords, sudoku, playing board games or computer games

- **reading** – books, newspapers or magazines (these may be available in different formats such as large print or audio)
- **needlecraft** – patchwork, knitting, embroidery or tapestry
- **sport** – watching or taking part
- **writing** – letters, stories or poetry, writing to a pen friend.

### How can I find out more?

If you want to try a new hobby or return to an old one, but you're not sure how, try talking to other stroke survivors to get some advice.

### Stroke clubs and groups

Our stroke clubs and groups offer support to people who have had a stroke. They are usually led by volunteers, often stroke survivors and carers themselves, and meet regularly, usually in local halls or community centres.

Each club and group is different but most offer activities – everything from speakers, outings and art classes through to communication and exercise sessions. There are clubs and groups all over the UK. To find your nearest one, call our Stroke Helpline on **0303 3033 100** or visit **[stroke.org.uk/clubs](https://stroke.org.uk/clubs)**.

### TalkStroke

TalkStroke is the Stroke Association's online discussion forum where anyone can share experiences, ask questions and get advice and encouragement from other people affected by stroke. You do not need to register on the site to read the discussions, but you will need to complete a registration form and create a username and password if you want to post a message. Visit **[stroke.org.uk/talkstroke](https://stroke.org.uk/talkstroke)**.

### Stroke News magazine

Stroke News is our magazine for everyone affected by stroke, produced three times a year. It's full of stories and personal advice from stroke survivors and their carers, and it also includes emotional and practical guidance on coping with life after stroke. Stroke News is available as an audio recording, as well as in print and online. To subscribe, call **01604 687 721** or email **[strokenews@stroke.org.uk](mailto:strokenews@stroke.org.uk)**.

### Go online

Search for websites, blogs and social media sites where you can read about leisure activities for people with health problems and disabilities. You could sign up for a newsletter, or join a Facebook group to get updates and tips shared by professionals and people with disabilities.

## Things you can try near you

### Visit your local library

They may have details of local clubs and events. Look out for leaflets and posters. They also often stock books in large print and on CD and many offer eBooks and eJournals.

### Contact your local council

Your local council will have details of day centres and other clubs near you. Some councils have this information on their website.

### Try your local adult education centre

They will have details of courses you can take such as arts and crafts, computer skills and exercise classes. They may also offer taster courses where you can try out an activity. Although you will usually have to pay for these courses, some centres offer concessions if you are disabled or on certain benefits.

### Visit your local leisure centre

Some local sports centres and swimming pools offer discounted membership or specialist classes for people with disabilities.

## Where to get help and information

### From the Stroke Association

#### Talk to us

Our Stroke Helpline is for anyone affected by a stroke, including family, friends and carers. The Helpline can give you information and support on any aspect of stroke.

Call us on **0303 3033 100**, from a textphone **18001 0303 3033 100** or email **info@stroke.org.uk**.

#### Read our publications

We publish detailed information about a wide range of stroke topics including reducing your risk of a stroke and rehabilitation. Read online at **stroke.org.uk** or call the Helpline to ask for printed copies.

## Other sources of help and information

### Aids and equipment

#### Disabled Living Foundation

**Website:** [www.dlf.org.uk](http://www.dlf.org.uk)

**Helpline:** 0300 999 0004

**Email:** [helpline@dlf.org.uk](mailto:helpline@dlf.org.uk)

Gives impartial advice about equipment for people with disabilities. They have in-depth information available on their website and a range of factsheets. They also have an equipment demonstration centre in London where you can view and try equipment.

### Wildlife and nature

#### **Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB)**

**Website:** [www.rspb.org.uk](http://www.rspb.org.uk)

**Tel:** 01767 680 551

Their website has information about all the nature reserves in the UK including how accessible they are.

#### **Wildlife Trusts**

**Website:**

[www.wildlifetrusts.org/accessiblereserves](http://www.wildlifetrusts.org/accessiblereserves)

List of accessible Wildlife Trust sites where you can visit woodland, wetlands and other habitats to see wild birds, insects and plants.

### Arts and crafts

#### **Conquest Art**

**Website:** [www.conquestart.org](http://www.conquestart.org)

**Tel:** 020 3044 2731

**Email:** [enquiries@conquestart.org](mailto:enquiries@conquestart.org)

Runs art groups for people with disabilities in Surrey, Merseyside, Worcestershire and Suffolk.

#### **Disability Arts Online**

**Website:** [www.disabilityartsonline.org.uk](http://www.disabilityartsonline.org.uk)

An online resource with articles and blogs about disability and art. Has a directory of organisations that specialise in disability arts including theatre, creative writing and painting.

### Days out

If you are planning a day out, contact the venue first. They can tell you about accessibility and any concessions you or your carer may be able to receive.

#### **English Heritage**

**Website:** [www.english-heritage.org.uk](http://www.english-heritage.org.uk)

**Tel:** 0370 333 1181

**Email:** [customers@english-heritage.co.uk](mailto:customers@english-heritage.co.uk)

Has details of historic sites and events throughout England.

#### **The National Trust**

**Website:** [www.nationaltrust.org.uk](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk)

**Tel:** 0844 800 1895

**Email:** [enquiries@nationaltrust.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@nationaltrust.org.uk)

Has information about places to visit and things to do across the UK. The website includes information for people with disabilities.

#### **The Rough Guide to Accessible Britain**

**Website:** [www.accessibleguide.co.uk](http://www.accessibleguide.co.uk)

An online guide with over 200 ideas for days out aimed at people with disabilities. Includes accessibility information as well as reviews and tips from disabled visitors.

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## Gardening

### Gardening for Disabled Trust

**Website:**

[www.gardeningfordisabledtrust.org.uk](http://www.gardeningfordisabledtrust.org.uk)  
Provides information and advice for disabled gardeners. You can receive information and newsletters by joining their Garden Club. They also give grants to people to help them continue gardening with disabilities.

### Thrive

**Website:** [www.thrive.org.uk](http://www.thrive.org.uk)

**Tel:** 0118 988 5688

**Email:** [info@thrive.org.uk](mailto:info@thrive.org.uk)

Helps older and disabled people to continue gardening. Has an information service, a range of publications and a dedicated website with useful advice and tips to help you garden, whatever your disability is.

## Music

### Sound Sense

**Website:** [www.soundsense.org](http://www.soundsense.org)

**Email:** [info@soundsense.org](mailto:info@soundsense.org)

A professional association that promotes community music. Produces an information sheet about instrument adaptations and where to find one-handed instruments.

## Photography

### Disabled Photographers' Society

**Website:**

[www.disabledphotographers.co.uk](http://www.disabledphotographers.co.uk)  
Promotes photography for people with disabilities. The website has a discussion forum and information about accessories that could help. They also have an adaptations coordinator that you can contact for advice about equipment.

### Photographers with Disabilities

**Website:**

[www.photographerswithdisabilities.org](http://www.photographerswithdisabilities.org)

**Email:**

[secretary@photographerswithdisabilities.org](mailto:secretary@photographerswithdisabilities.org)  
Runs photo shoots and Photoshop lessons at their accessible studio in Yate near Bristol.

## Puzzles and games

### British Jigsaw Puzzle Library

**Website:**

[www.britishjigsawpuzzlelibrary.co.uk](http://www.britishjigsawpuzzlelibrary.co.uk)

**Tel:** 01264 393 065

**Email:** [puzzlelibrary@virginmedia.com](mailto:puzzlelibrary@virginmedia.com)

Operates a lending library of wooden jigsaw puzzles. For a subscription fee, members can borrow puzzles by post. The jigsaws vary in size and difficulty, and they stock puzzles with larger pieces suitable for people with disabilities.

### Partially Sighted Society

**Website:** [www.partsight.org.uk](http://www.partsight.org.uk)

**Tel:** 01302 965 195

**Email:** [reception@partsight.org.uk](mailto:reception@partsight.org.uk)

Sells a range of products including large print crossword books and playing cards, card holders and jigsaws with pieces twice the usual size.

## Reading and listening

### Calibre audio library

**Website:** [www.calibre.org.uk](http://www.calibre.org.uk)

**Tel:** 01296 432 339

**Email:** [enquiries@calibre.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@calibre.org.uk)

A national charity that lends unabridged audiobooks to adults and children who have sight problems or other disabilities that make it difficult to use books. The lending service is free, although there is a single joining fee of £35 (£20 for children) to join the library.

### Listening Books

**Website:** [www.listening-books.org.uk](http://www.listening-books.org.uk)

**Tel:** 020 7407 9417

**Email:** [info@listening-books.org.uk](mailto:info@listening-books.org.uk)

A service that provides audiobooks through the post on CD as well as to download or stream online. There is an annual membership fee but this may be paid by your local council.

### Playback Recording Service

**Website:** [www.play-back.com](http://www.play-back.com)

**Tel:** 0141 334 2983

**Email:** [peter.fraser@play-back.org.uk](mailto:peter.fraser@play-back.org.uk)

Provides a free service transcribing text to audio for people with visual problems. Also has a large library of publications in audio format that you can borrow.

### Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB)

**Website:** [www.rnib.org.uk](http://www.rnib.org.uk)

**Helpline:** 0303 123 9999

**Email:** [helpline@rnib.org.uk](mailto:helpline@rnib.org.uk)

People with sight problems can sign up to the RNIB Library and receive giant print books and music resources for free. The RNIB Talking Books service offers audiobooks on CD, USB and by digital download. You can also subscribe to RNIB Newsagent, which offers more than 200 popular publications, including daily and weekend newspapers and top-selling magazines, in a variety of audio formats.

### Needlecraft

#### Lowery Workstands

**Website:** [www.workstands.com](http://www.workstands.com)

**Tel:** 01652 628 240

**Email:** [services@workstands.com](mailto:services@workstands.com)

Supplies specialist tapestry frames and embroidery rings.

### Writing

#### The FED: A Network of Writing and Community Publishers

**Website:** [www.thefed.btck.co.uk](http://www.thefed.btck.co.uk)

**Email:** [fedonline1@gmail.com](mailto:fedonline1@gmail.com)

An organisation for writers' groups and community publishers. Has a number of regional groups, organises writing challenges and has help available for members who lack confidence or wish to develop their skills.

### Theatre

#### Official London Theatre

**Website:** [www.officallondontheatre.co.uk](http://www.officallondontheatre.co.uk)

A website that provides listings for theatre events in London. It includes an accessibility page with accessible venue and transport guides, as well as information about assisted performances.

### Radio

#### RAIBC

**Website:** [www.raibc.org.uk](http://www.raibc.org.uk)

**Helpline:** 0800 028 8660

A group for people with disabilities who are interested in amateur radio. Can give advice on equipment and has a quarterly magazine.

### Keeping in touch

At the Stroke Association, we understand that the impact of a stroke can turn everything upside down in an instant, not just for the stroke survivor but for their loved ones too.

We are proud to be the leading stroke charity in the UK, changing the world for people affected by stroke. As you may know, our vital work covers many areas, including providing support and information to stroke survivors and their families, funding research into stroke treatment and care, and campaigning to raise awareness of stroke.

We are determined to conquer stroke, but we cannot do it alone.

Keep in touch and find out more about our work. This includes groundbreaking research developments, other services that might benefit you and opportunities to get involved with appeals, campaigns or volunteering for the Stroke Association.

To keep in touch, either fill out our online contact form at **[stroke.org.uk/signup](https://stroke.org.uk/signup)** or complete your details below and send them to our freepost address:

**Freepost RSZL-SAUL-GRBK**  
**Keeping in touch**  
**Life After Stroke Centre**  
**Church Lane**  
**Bromsgrove**  
**Worcestershire B61 8RA**

#### Your contact details

**I am a:**

- ☐ stroke survivor    ☐ family/friend  
☐ carer    ☐ other

**First name:**

**Surname:**

**Address:**

**Town/city:**

**County:**

**Postcode:**

**Email:**

**Telephone number:**

**I would like to receive Stroke News:**

- ☐ online (we'll email you to let you know when an online copy is available)  
☐ by post (we'll send you a free copy)

- ☐ **I'm happy for the Stroke Association to keep in touch with news updates and ways to get involved**

**I'm happy to be contacted by:**

(please tick all that apply)

- ☐ post    ☐ telephone    ☐ email

You can change or stop the way we contact you at any time by calling our friendly Supporter Care team on **0300 330 0740**, or by emailing **[supportercare@stroke.org.uk](mailto:supportercare@stroke.org.uk)**.

## About our information

We want to provide the best information for people affected by stroke. That's why we ask stroke survivors and their families, as well as medical experts, to help us put our publications together.

### How did we do?

To tell us what you think of this guide, or to request a list of the sources we used to create it, email us at [feedback@stroke.org.uk](mailto:feedback@stroke.org.uk).

### Accessible formats

Visit our website if you need this information in audio, large print or braille.

### Always get individual advice

Please be aware that this information is not intended as a substitute for specialist professional advice tailored to your situation. We strive to ensure that the content we provide is accurate and up-to-date, but information can change over time. So far as is permitted by law, the Stroke Association does not accept any liability in relation to the use of the information in this publication, or any third-party information or websites included or referred to.

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We rely on your support to fund life-saving research and vital services for people affected by stroke. Join the fight against stroke now at [stroke.org.uk/fundraising](http://stroke.org.uk/fundraising)  
**Together we can conquer stroke.**

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).