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 resource sheet lists ideas for you to try and has details of resources and organisations you may find helpful.

Looking for ways to spend your leisure time?

Here are some suggestions:

- **animals** – keeping a pet, bird watching
- **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 (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.

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 – from adaptations and specialist equipment, to organisations that can offer advice and local groups that you can join.

Interested in exercise or sport? Our leaflet *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. Go to [stroke.org.uk/publications](http://stroke.org.uk/publications) to find it.

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.

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

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 out about your nearest one, call our Stroke Helpline on 0303 3033 100 or visit stroke.org.uk/clubs

TalkStroke is an online discussion forum where you can share your experiences, ask questions and receive 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

Other ways we can help

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 stomenews@stroke.org.uk

Our online tool Equip Stroke has been developed in partnership with the Disability Living Foundation to help you find the right aids and equipment, including ones that can help you enjoy hobbies such as craft activities, games, gardening and walking. By answering a few questions about the things that you find difficult, you can receive a personalised report with advice and links to products that could help you. Go to stroke.org.uk/equip-stroke

Our Stroke Helpline can give you information about any aspect of stroke and tell you about services, groups and other useful organisations in your local area. Call our Stroke Helpline on 0303 3033 100 (Monday to Friday, 9am-5pm) or email info@stroke.org.uk

Other things you can try

- sign up to receive the Disability Now newsletter. Disability Now is a website that contains news and stories that are relevant to people with disabilities. Their regular email newsletter has details of new content including events listings and articles about travel, sport and entertainment. Visit www.disabilitynow.org.uk

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

- 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.

- contact 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 for older people or people who aren’t working, so make sure you ask if they have any that apply to you.
Leisure activities after stroke

Other useful contacts

If you’re looking for more information the following organisations may also be able to help. All are UK wide unless otherwise stated. Please note that details of these organisations are for information only. We are not recommending or endorsing anyone by including them in this factsheet.

Aids and equipment

Disabled Living Foundation
Website: www.dlf.org.uk
Helpline: 0300 999 0004
Email: 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.

Animals

Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB)
Website: 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.

Arts and crafts

Conquest Art
Website: www.conquestart.org
Tel: 020 8397 6157
Email: conquestart@hotmail.com
Runs art groups for people with disabilities in Surrey, Merseyside, Worcestershire and Suffolk.

Disability Arts Online
Website: 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
Tel: 0370 333 1181
Email: customers@english-heritage.co.uk
Has details of historic sites and events throughout England.

The National Trust
Website: www.nationaltrust.org.uk
Tel: 0844 800 1895
Email: 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.

Gardening

Gardening for Disabled Trust
Website: 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 despite their disabilities.
Leisure activities after stroke

Thrive
Website: www.thrive.org.uk
Tel: 0118 988 5688
Advice website: www.carryongardening.co.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
Tel: 01449 673 990
Email: 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
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
Email: 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
Tel: 01264 393 065
Email: 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
Tel: 01302 965 195
Email: 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
Tel: 01296 432 339
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 administration fee of £50 (£20 for children) to join the library.
Leisure activities after stroke

Listening Books
Website: www.listening-books.org.uk
Tel: 020 7407 9417
Email: 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
Tel: 0141 334 2983
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.

RNIB
Website: www.rnib.org.uk
Helpline: 0303 123 9999
Email: 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 sends audiobooks on CD and USB by post for an annual fee of £50. 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
Tel: 01652 628 240
Supplies specialist tapestry frames and embroidery rings.

Writing

The FED: A Network of Writing and Community Publishers
Website: www.thefed.btck.co.uk
Email: 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.

Other

RAIBC
Website: www.raibc.org.uk
Tel: 0800 014 1743
A group for people with disabilities who are interested in amateur radio. Can give advice on equipment and has a quarterly magazine.
About our information
We are committed to producing clear, accurate and unbiased information for stroke survivors and their families. To produce our publications we use information from professional bodies and other reliable sources including NICE, SIGN, Royal College of Physicians and medical journals. To request a list of sources used in this factsheet email feedback@stroke.org.uk

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