Resuming leisure activities after a stroke

There is life after a stroke. At times you may feel that your life has changed dramatically - but you can put the pieces back together. Until now you may have been preoccupied with your treatment, therapy and recovery, but you also need to think about your social life. Life will be different but it can still hold pleasure, satisfaction and fun.

As you start to pick up the pieces of your life you may recognise that activities you previously enjoyed are no longer easy - but life does continue, and rebuilding your social life is an important part of your recovery.

If you are on your own, contact with others is particularly important. If you live with somebody, you will inevitably be spending a lot of time together. You will each need time for your own interests as well as planning a social life together.

Sometimes when people have been ill, others may not know how to respond. It can help if you make the first move. So take the initiative - invite friends and family around and explain.

It is also good to make new friends and it can be very beneficial to talk to people who are experiencing similar problems.

When you are thinking about resuming leisure interests you may find it useful to ask yourself the following questions:

1. What existing hobbies can I continue?
   You may be limited by your recovery but there is a great deal that you can do. Getting exercise is important and a good way of doing this is by participation in activities that you previously enjoyed. If you had a hobby that you now find difficult, it may be possible to modify it. There are many pieces of equipment designed to make things easier for people with disability.

2. Is there something I have always wanted to do, but never had time for?
   Some people find that they are now able to take part in activities at a time of day that was previously difficult for them or that their work activities left no time for. There are many groups and educational classes that take place during the day time.

3. What opportunities are available?
   Local stroke clubs can provide support for you and your family with lots of different activities, such as exercise sessions, outings and social gatherings.

Disability Direct, Crossroads Derby, Headway, Leonard Cheshire, New Horizons and other voluntary organisations also offer activities and support that may interest you.
4. **Is there any help for me to do what I want to do?**
You may be able to have some help participating in your chosen leisure interest. Your occupational therapist can advise on how to resume previous hobbies or take up new ones.

Skillport is a life coaching and support service for disabled people living in Derby. Life skills advisers work alongside disabled people to identify their personal aspirations and life goals and how to achieve them. The main aim is to improve disabled people’s access to learning, personal development and employment opportunities. This is part of the Derby Social Services Enablement Service.

Derbyshire County and Derby City have stroke support workers who can help.

5. **Who can help me to find out about this help and opportunities?**
There is a *single point of contact for stroke* in the community. This service can direct you to stroke related activities and services.

**Transport and travel**
This may seem a little daunting to start with but with a little bit of organisation, there is no reason why you cannot travel. There are local transport organisations and services that make travel more accessible to people with disabilities.

Holidays are achievable too. Several companies organise travel and holidays for people with disabilities and a travel agent should be able to advise you. The Stroke Association have a leaflet that gives more information.

It is also worth talking to your doctor to discuss how long you should wait before flying. As a general rule, it is usually advisable to avoid flying in the first 3 - 6 months. The main problem with flying or other long journeys is the risk of deep vein thrombosis (a blood clot) in the legs. Once formed, a clot can later start moving round the blood stream and reach the lungs or heart.

**Useful organisations and contacts**

*Single point of contact for stroke*
Telephone: **01332 888200** for information about all local stroke related activities and services in the community including:

- Derby and Derbyshire Stroke Rehabilitation and Support Services (including the city and county stroke support workers).
- Southern Derbyshire Stroke Co-ordination Service - can assess any difficulties related to your stroke after discharge from hospital and provide advice or information.
- Voluntary Sector Activities
- Derbyshire Stroke Clubs Network
- Derby Stroke Carers’ Group
- Derby Stroke Club One
- Derby Stroke Club Two
- Amber Valley Stroke Support Group
- Ilkeston Stroke Club
- North Derbyshire Stroke Support Group
- Ashbourne and District Stroke Support Group
- Bakewell Stroke Club
- Long Eaton (Parklands) Stroke Club
- Belper Stroke Club
- Swadlincote and South Derbyshire Stroke Club
- Castle Donington Stroke Club
- Spondon Stroke Club
- Friends of the Stroke Unit (stroke support group)
- Steppin’ Forward (stroke club for younger people in Swadlincote and Burton)
- Derby Younger Stroke Contact Group

**Derbyshire Carers Association**
If your partner or carer feels the need to talk to somebody, this organisation can help.

Telephone: 01332 200002
Website: [www.derbyshirecarers.co.uk](http://www.derbyshirecarers.co.uk)

**The Stroke Association National Helpline**
Stroke Information Service
Stroke House
240 City Road
London
EC1V 2PR

Telephone: 0303 3033 100
Email: info@stroke.org.uk
Website: [www.stroke.org.uk](http://www.stroke.org.uk)

**Derby City Council Skillport Service**
Telephone: 01332 717777
Minicom: 01332 206180
Website: [www.derby.gov.uk](http://www.derby.gov.uk) and look for Adult Social Care

**Derby Shop Mobility** - provides electrically powered scooters, wheelchairs and manual wheelchairs for a few hours to enable people with disabilities to shop and to use the facilities of the city centre.

Morledge
Derby
DE1 2AY

Telephone: 01332 200 320
Door 2 Door (Derby City Accessible Transport Service)
Meadow Road Garage
Meadow Road
Derby
DE1 2BH
Telephone: 01332 380738

Derbyshire Community Transport Services (one service per borough/district)
The Integrated Transport Group
Environmental Services Department
Derbyshire County Council
County Hall
Matlock
DE4 3AG
Email: elaine.wachlarz@derbyshire.gov.uk

You may also find it useful to investigate some of the following sources:
- Your local library and Social Services
- The internet

References
Royal College of Physicians Stroke Guidelines 2004
The Stroke Association - Information leaflets, 2006. Website: www.stroke.org.uk/information

Any external organisations and websites included here do not necessarily reflect the views of the Derby Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, nor does their inclusion constitute a recommendation.

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