

WheelPower's Guide to An Active Life following Spinal Cord Injury



Name:

Helping you secure the best possible future

Our team has been ranked N o.1 by Chambers and The Legal 500, the two leading independent guides to the legal profession, for more than 25 years

Our role is to guide our clients through the claims process and help them secure the best possible future. Ultimately our goal is to help our clients lead full and active lives



“

The phenomenal Stewarts remains the stand out firm for claimant personal injury. The extremely effective team has an outstanding track record in high value catastrophic injury work.

– The Legal 500

”



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How can WheelPower support you?

WheelPower is the national charity for wheelchair sport, supporting people with physical disabilities of all ages to lead healthier and more active lives through movement, activity and sport.

WheelPower is here to help you to discover wheelchair sport and be more active through our calendar of events and online exercise programmes. Our team are also here to offer advice and support you to realise your sporting potential, whether you are a first timer or someone looking to return to sport.



Sport can develop confidence and improve fitness but it is also a great way to have fun and make friends. We have seen how playing sport can enrich lives, offering tremendous physical and psychological benefits, whatever your age or ability.

wheelpower.org.uk

Your WheelPower Physical Activity Advisor



We understand that following a life changing injury, being motivated to exercise and play sport can sometimes be difficult.

With the support of our WheelPower Physical Activity Advisors we will help you to move more, improve your physical and mental well-being, increase your fitness and discover the many benefits that regular exercise provides.

How our Advisors can help you...

- They can call on their own personal experiences and knowledge as a wheelchair user to be a positive role model
- Provide advice about physical activity and wheelchair sport
- Deliver physical activity sessions with individuals and groups
- Use their local knowledge and experience to signpost you to external organisations to support the continuation of physical activity and sport following discharge



wheelpower.org.uk/advisors

Resistance Bands

The WheelPower Resistance Bands programme began in response to the pandemic in 2020, and to date, the gift of **FREE** bands has supported over 2,000 physically disabled people to stay active from their homes. The bands are great for warming up before exercising, strength training or physical therapy rehabilitation.

In a set of latex Resistance Bands you will find:

- Five bands of different colours/strengths
- Hand grips and ankle straps
- A door anchor

Apply for your
own set of bands



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ME



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case management

wheelpower.org.uk/bands

Online Exercise Classes

WheelPower began delivering online exercise classes via Zoom during the Covid-19 pandemic. The first class took place in May 2020 and they continue to support physically disabled people across the UK to this day.

We currently host three FREE online exercise classes every week which vary between: yoga, cardio, adaptive box-fit, and tai chi.

The online exercise classes are open to anyone with a physical disability wanting to maintain/improve their fitness from the comfort of their home.

**Scan the QR code
to find out more**



wheelpower.org.uk/classes

Online Exercise Videos



Work out anywhere, anytime on any device!

We have produced a range of fitness videos with your whole well-being in mind. You can get stronger, boost your energy and reduce stress with our online fitness experts.

Choose from a variety of wheelchair exercises classes like heart-rate boosting cardio, adaptive box-fit, wheelchair dance, tai chi and wheelchair yoga. We have everything you need to feel your best and improve your level of fitness online.

We have over 50 videos available on our WheelPower YouTube Channel (@WheelPower Videos)



wheelpower.org.uk/exercise-videos

AJM Choice is here to help you enable your mobility, your way, with life enhancing equipment



We review functional lifestyle goals to find equipment that will empower you to live your best life, engaging in exciting, meaningful activities unique to every individual



We have clinically trained therapists, plus seating and mobility specialists, who conduct in-depth assessments for posture and mobility needs



Contact us to find out how we can support you today and throughout your life:

choice@ajmhealthcare.org

0330 1281260

www.ajmchoice.com

Support Us

As the national charity for wheelchair sport, our mission is to help physically disabled people move more, play sport, and lead healthy, active lives and we can do more with your help. Whether you choose to donate or fundraise, every contribution makes an impact.

Take on a challenge

Get sponsored and take part in a marathon, a fitness challenge, a cycling race or even a skydive! Seek sponsorship from friends, family and colleagues to raise vital funds for our programmes.



Host your own event

Organise a bake sale, a sports tournament, or gala event. Get creative and rally your community to support our mission.



Get involved today

We are a small charity that relies on donations to fund our sports events and programmes. Your support will make sure that together, we can continue supporting physically disabled people.

wheelpower.org.uk/supportus

Physical Activity after a Spinal Cord Injury

What should I aim for each week?

Step 1: Starting Goal

AEROBIC ACTIVITY

20 minutes
2 x week



Step 2: Progress Goal

AEROBIC ACTIVITY

30 minutes
3 x week



Step 1 & 2 activities should be of moderate to vigorous intensity

STRENGTH ACTIVITY

3 Sets
10 Reps
2 x Week



STRENGTH ACTIVITY

3 Sets
10 Reps
2 x Week



Gradually increase load weight of strength activity

What are aerobic activities?

Continuous activities such as pushing, dancing, and arm cycling.

What are strength activities?

Activities using your body weight, resistance bands or weights to increase strength.

What is moderate to vigorous intensity?

Moderate intensity should feel somewhat hard, vigorous intensity should feel hard or very hard. Intensity infographic linked below.

Scan the QR code to find out more

Or visit:

linktr.ee/physicalactivityaftersci



Benefits of Physical Activity after a Spinal Cord Injury

Hospital to Home

At the Spinal Injuries Centre there are lots of ways to help keep you active, and this will help make the transition home easier. Ask your WheelPower Physical Activity Advisor or physiotherapist about:

- Weekly physical activity taster sessions
- 'The Staying Healthy after a SCI' education session
- Peer support meetings
- The Inter Spinal Unit Games



Before you leave hospital, speak with your healthcare team about how you can keep active at home.

What can help me prepare?

A few weeks before you are discharged from hospital, chat to your physiotherapist about maintaining your rehabilitation. You can create a discharge pack together. Depending on your needs, this may contain:

- Assisted stretches
- Positioning examples
- Exercise pictures or videos of you performing your exercises

Set goals before you go!

They continue beyond your time in hospital, and it is important to keep making new ones to continue to progress.

wheelpower.org.uk/spinal

Why should I keep active?

After a SCI you are at greater risk of developing health conditions such as diabetes, urinary tract infections, and obesity. Regular physical activity can help to reduce this risk, whilst improving health and fitness.



It can have a big impact on improving your quality of life, independence and function. This can then help improve your ability to do day-to-day tasks e.g. transferring in and out of the car. Physical activity gives you more energy and you may feel less tired throughout the day.

Social: Physical activity can get you out of the house. You can spend time with your friends or loved ones, or even meet new people. By joining a local sports club or gym, you can socialise with others.

Health: Reduced risk of developing health complications such as: diabetes, obesity, urinary tract infections, pressure sores, or respiratory illness. Also helps you to manage: spasticity, weight gain, pain, function.

Mental Health: Activity can help to reduce symptoms of depression and anxiety. It can lift your mood and improve your self-esteem. If you find an activity or sport that you enjoy, it can be fun.

wheelpower.org.uk/spinal

What is aerobic activity?

Aerobic activity is the continuous movement of the body. Depending on your level of injury, it may increase your heart rate, breathing and make you a bit warm and sweaty.



Types of aerobic activity:

- Everyday activities such as housework, playing with your children, walking the dog, and gardening
- Walking or wheeling at the park, or commuting to work
- Sport such as badminton, cycling, and rugby
- Gym classes like body pump or home workouts online

What is strength activity?

Strength activities involve using your body weight, resistance bands or weights to increase strength. Regular physical activity can help improve strength, mobility, fitness and balance.

Types of strength activity:

- Everyday activities such as carrying your shopping, or digging in the garden
- Strengthening classes like yoga or pilates
- Traditional strength training such as squats, calf raises, chest press, bicep curl

Scan the QR code to watch a video about the benefits of exercise for people with a SCI



wheelpower.org.uk/spinal

How to overcome barriers to exercise

Physical activity and exercise can help you become both physically and mentally fit.

Exercise can help improve health and well-being by improving mood, reducing stress and decreasing depression. It can also help boost your self-esteem and give you confidence in other areas of life. To gain these psychological benefits you must maintain a regular exercise routine but this isn't always easy. As a disabled person you may face a number of barriers to physical activity which can make becoming and staying active a real challenge.

Here are a few of the common barriers and how you can try to overcome them:



Loughborough University

Peter Harrison Centre
for Disability Sport

Vicky Tolfrey

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"I don't know where to start"

The most important thing is to find an activity that you enjoy doing so that you will keep doing it. Join a friend at the gym, try an exercise class or head to the park with your family; adding a social element can make it much more fun. Don't be afraid of trying new and unfamiliar activities as these can often surprise you and leave you wanting more. Find some like-minded people to exercise with in your local area, you will help motivate each other. Also visit everybodemoves.org.uk for information on what sports are available for disabled people and to help you find local sports clubs.

"I feel too tired to exercise"

If this sounds like you then consider when it is that you are most tired. If it's in the evening after work, then try to exercise in the early morning or during your lunch break. If you feel most fatigued first thing in the morning simply plan to do your exercise later in the day. These simple steps are common sense but will help you get started. It is also worth considering that regular exercise can actually reduce fatigue and help you sleep better. After a few weeks of regular physical activity you should notice your energy levels improve.

"My local facility isn't accessible"

Accessibility is a common issue faced by disabled people. However, you do not necessarily need a gym or leisure centre to become more active. You can do lots of exercises with minimal equipment in many different

environments such as in your home or at the park.

"I just don't have the time"

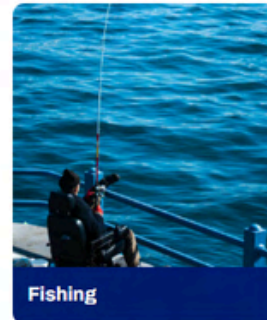
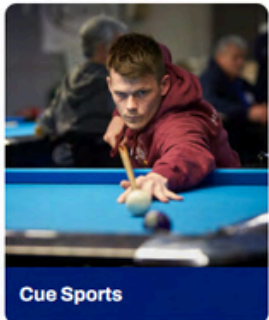
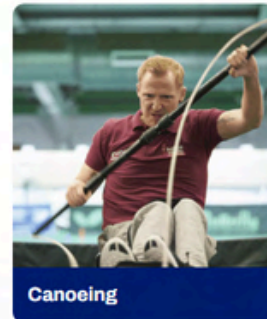
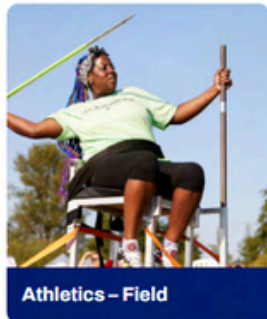
Many people live hectic lifestyles that are busy with both work and family commitments. Not having sufficient time to exercise is a genuine concern. Difficulties with travel can make your trip to an exercise venue annoyingly long or expensive and so it is important to consider where else you might be able to exercise. A long commute to your local gym is no longer needed if you can do a workout at your local park or even in your own home/garden. The amount of exercise you need to do to gain benefits is often overestimated too. As little as 30 minutes of moderate intensity activity a day, five times a week is enough to help you feel physically and mentally fit. Multiple bouts of at least 10 minutes are also just as good; how about before or after work and a short session during your lunch hour?

"Because I've always been rubbish at exercise and sport"

You may have disliked PE at school because of an emphasis on competitive sport, the group atmosphere, a lack of choice or that age-old classic of being picked last. It may be hard to forget these feelings but remember that as an adult you can choose exactly what type of exercise and/or sport you do, who you do it with, when and also whether you do it for leisure or competitively; you are in control! Finding a type of exercise that you enjoy will hopefully prolong your involvement.

Find a Sport

There is a large variety of sports available to those with a spinal cord injury. Go to our website and click on the sport that you are interested in. You will find details of the National Governing Body who will assist you in finding a local club.

[All](#)[Water Sports](#)[Paralympic Sports](#)[Active Lifestyle](#)[Team Sports](#)[Winter Sports](#)

Active Partnerships can also help you to source a local club or coach. There is an Active Partnership based within every county in England.

www.activepartnerships.org/active-partnerships

A further great resource to help you to find local clubs is the website **www.everybodymoves.org.uk**

wheelpower.org.uk/sports

Inter Spinal Unit Games



The Inter Spinal Unit Games is held annually at Stoke Mandeville Stadium and it forms an essential part of many spinal patients' rehabilitation.

Patients from 15 spinal units across the UK and Ireland are invited to compete in taster session and sporting events. The event regularly attracts at least 20 different sports that include wheelchair rugby, athletics, table tennis, handcycling, tennis, fencing, wheelchair basketball, powerlifting, rowing, curling and archery.



Ask your Physical Activity Advisor or Physiotherapist about how you can get involved.

wheelpower.org.uk/spinal-games

Sports Events

WheelPower Sports Festivals

WheelPower's Sports Festivals are held in locations close to spinal injury units, making them accessible to inpatients, as well as the local community. These Festivals are the perfect introduction to a variety of sports, and are suitable for anyone with a physical disability. Our regular Sports Festivals are held in Yorkshire, Buckinghamshire, Middlesex, and Wiltshire, but we often venture into other counties as well.

Learn to... with WheelPower

WheelPower's Learn to... series of events, takes the participant out of the sports hall, and onto snow, ice, water and grass! With events such as Learn to: curl, handcycle, ski, horse ride and play golf - there's always something new to experience.

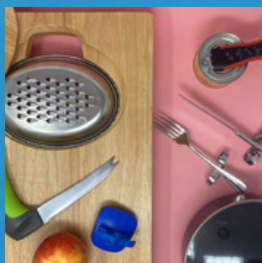


wheelpower.org.uk/sport-events

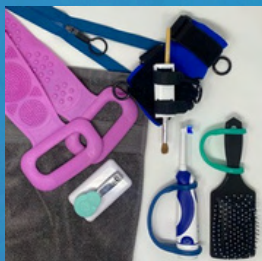


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Engaging Wheelchair Participants In Sport

If you are a teacher, coach, sports student, physiotherapist, or occupational therapist striving to adapt your sports session for wheelchair participants, then this training is for you.

We understand that there are many people in our community working with people with physical disabilities. This short online course is here to give you the knowledge and confidence in your own organisation.



Learning Outcomes

- Learn about the wide range of sports available to wheelchair users across the UK
- Explore different ways of including physically disabled people in wheelchair sports, using practical examples across a number of sports
- Develop confidence in working with and supporting physically disabled people to enjoy, participate and access sport, activity and movement opportunities

wheelpower.org.uk/training

My Personal Goals

Type of physical activity I enjoyed prior to injury:

Current readiness for activity:

Available resources (resistance bands, local gym/sports clubs, funding)

Barriers to undertaking exercise

Action Plan:

Date:

Notes

My Physical Activity Advisor is:

Email:

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Jonny is a VaPro™ catheter user



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WheelPower

British Wheelchair Sport

Useful Websites

Spinal Injuries Association

spinal.co.uk

Aspire

aspire.org.uk

Back Up

backuptrust.org.uk

Spinal Injuries Scotland

spinalinjuriesScotland.org.uk

Disability Sport NI

dsni.co.uk

Disability Sport Wales

disabilitysportwales.com

Scottish Disability Sport

scottishdisabilitysport.com

Every Body Moves

everybodymoves.org.uk

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