Getting back into life: Social support and activities

The effects of stroke may require you to make major changes in your daily life. Adjusting to these changes will take time. It is normal to go through a period of grieving. You and your family may feel sad, angry, afraid and frustrated.

It can be helpful to talk with others who have had a stroke.

Peer support groups give you a chance to:
- share your stories
- learn from others
- get support from others who have had a similar experience

Join a peer support group. It can be helpful to see that you and your family are not alone.

You don’t have to give up the hobbies or leisure activities you enjoyed before your stroke. You may need to adapt some activities or you can develop new interests.

Your Occupational Therapist can help you adapt activities and learn to use assistive devices. For example, you can learn to fish, play golf or do other activities with the use of one hand or limited mobility.

Many community and day programs offer social, recreational and exercise activities for people living with stroke.
Physical activity is a great way for you to:

• stay active
• reduce the risk of another stroke
• meet people

Some programs you may want to consider are:

• adult day programs
• bowling leagues
• chair fitness classes
• gardening programs
• golf
• pool programs
• yoga, Pilates or Tai chi classes

Questions about activities

• What are my interests?
• What assistive devices would help me take part in leisure activities?
• Do I want to go to any social, recreation or fitness programs?
• Am I interested in joining a support group for people who have had a stroke?
Resources about activities

GENERAL INFORMATION

• Let’s Talk About Stroke, a guide developed by the Heart and Stroke Foundation, pages 46-48, 58

• Heart and Stroke Foundation – Living with Stroke Program
  www.heartandstroke.on.ca/site/c.pvl3leNWJwE/b.4356259/k.DDE6/StrokeLiving_with_StrokeTM.htm. Check the website or call 416-489-7111 to find the one nearest you.

PEER SUPPORT

• Stroke Recovery Canada Peer Support Groups
  check the website for the group nearest you
  www.marchofdimes.ca/EN/programs/src/supportgroups/Pages/OntarioSupportGroups.aspx
  o Toronto Central Chapter 416-425-3463 ext 7714
  o Toronto Pathfinders Chapter (for people who had their stroke before age 50) 416-425-3463 ext 7714
  o Warmline is a confidential peer support toll-free line 1-888-540-6666 for those affected by stroke (stroke survivor or caregiver).

• Marilyn Sherman’s Stroke Thrivers Blog
  http://marilynshermansstrokethriversblog.blogspot.com – learn from Marilyn’s own experiences living with stroke. Her website provides practical tips and a means to connect with a peer.
DAY PROGRAMS AND RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES

• **Central Neighbourhood House – Stroke Survivors Club**
  offers an adult day program including social activities, refreshments and exercise. [www.cnh.on.ca/programs-services/stroke-survivors-club](http://www.cnh.on.ca/programs-services/stroke-survivors-club) or call 416-925-4363 ext. 119

• **Centre for Independent Living in Toronto**
  offers social programs such as a Diner’s Club where participants visit a restaurant each month and meet new people or a Prime-Timer’s Group for older people with disabilities, many of whom have had a stroke. [www.cilt.ca](http://www.cilt.ca) or call 416-599-2458

• **Community Head Injury Resource Services – Adult Day Services** offers a variety of social, recreational and skill building programs. [http://chirs.com/Adult_Day_Services.html](http://chirs.com/Adult_Day_Services.html) or call 416-240-8000

• **COTA Health**
  is an accredited provider of mental health and community support services which include case management, supportive housing, short-term residential beds and a day program. [www.cotahealth.ca](http://www.cotahealth.ca) or call 416 785-9230
  
  o Offers a Wednesday afternoon Stoke Recovery Group at the Wellesley Community Center – contact: Rhonda Buchanan.
  
  o Offers a day program at Providence Centre for stroke recovery.

• **Downsview Services to Seniors BOOST Program**
  is a social, recreational and therapeutic program for people with stroke – call 416-633-9519
• MOST Moving On after Stroke Program – Baycrest
teaches you the skills needed to live successfully with stroke. Includes participatory discussion, education and exercise sessions on land and/or in a warm water pool.
www.baycrest.org/Programs_and_Services/Healthy_Living/11956.asp or call 416-785-2500 ext. 2683

• North York Seniors Centre
offers a variety of programs and services to enable seniors to be active, live well and stay socially connected. www.nyseniors.org or call 416-733-4111

• Second Mile Club
offers an adult day program including group activities and meals. http://secondmileclub.ca/programs/adult-day-program or call 416-922-5819

• Senior Link Stroke Group
offers a recreational and support group – call 416-691-7407 ext. 209

• St. Christopher House
offers social and recreational programs for older adults with physical and/or cognitive impairments. www.stchrishouse.org/older-adults/alzheimer-frail-adults/AlzheimerAndFrailEld/elderly-descrip-our-program or call 416-532-4838

• St. Clair West Services
for Seniors provides supervised social, recreational and therapeutic programming for seniors and adults with disabilities. http://servicesforseniors.ca/services-programs/adult-day-centre.html or call 416-787-2114
• **TIME Together In Movement and Exercise**
  is a fitness program run jointly by Toronto Rehab Institute and Toronto Parks, Forestry and Recreation. Three locations:
  o Avenue Road / Eglinton 416-395-0267
  o Bathurst / Queen’s Quay 416-392-1509
  o Dufferin / Dupont 416-338-5131

• **Villa Columbo Services for Seniors**
  offers an adult day program and other community programs primarily for the Italian community.

• **Yee-Hong Centre for Geriatric Care**
  offers a broad range of social, recreational and educational activities for Chinese and Asian seniors in the community. This includes an adult day program, dining, friendly visiting and outreach.
  [www.yeehong.com/centre/community_services.php](http://www.yeehong.com/centre/community_services.php) or call 416-321-6333

• **Variety Village**
  is a one-of-a-kind fitness facility adapted for people of all ages and abilities.
  [www.varietyvillage.ca](http://www.varietyvillage.ca) or call 416-699-7167

• **Toronto Parks, Forestry and Recreation**
  offers a large number of recreation programs and services in over 100 community centres across the city.
  [www.toronto.ca/parks/torontofun/index.htm](http://www.toronto.ca/parks/torontofun/index.htm) or dial 311

• **Abilities Canada**
  [www.abilities.ca](http://www.abilities.ca) – website that links those with disabilities to sport, recreation and other areas of interest.
COMMUNITY SERVICES

• **Community Care Resources**
  website is a service of the Toronto Central Community Care Access Centre that allows you to search online for day programs in your area.
  www.toronto.communitycareresources.ca or call 416-506-9888 or 1-866-243-0061

• **Community Navigation and Access Program (CNAP)**
  is a network of not-for-profit organizations working together to serve seniors in communities across Toronto. They will link you to services such as Meals on Wheels, adult day programs, transportation, home help, counselling, caregiver services, shopping help, group dining, personal care, and other services. www.cnap.ca/content/home/home.aspx or call toll free 1-877-540-6565

• **Home & Community Support**
  provides caregiver, community, health, home and nutrition services to help people with disability, illness or seniors function independently at home and stay connected to their community.
  http://homeandcommunitysupport.ca or call the Ontario Community Support Association at 416-256-3010 or toll-free 1-800-267-6272

• **211 Toronto Community Connection**
  www.211toronto.ca allows you to search online from over 20,000 community, social, health and government services in Toronto. Or dial 2-1-1 to reach a certified information and referral specialist by phone.
BOOKS OF INTEREST

• Stroke of Luck, Dr. Howard Rocket
• My Stroke of Insight, Jill Bolte Taylor
• The Brain that Changes Itself, Norman Doidge
• Living a Healthy Life with Chronic Conditions: For ongoing physical and mental health conditions (Canadian Edition), Lorig, Sobel, Gonzalez and Minor; Bull Publishing Co. 2007