

Living with a stroke By Cherie Madden

What sorts of things or strategies helped you get more active?

Motivation

- As a single parent of one, my son who was 9 at the time of the stroke was my primary motivation for getting more active. I could see that my mental state was really taking a toll on him and his mental and emotional wellbeing.
- I also wanted to complete the certificate course i was doing at university at the time of my stroke as I was only 50 hours short of its completion.

Strategies

- I was fortunate to have family to offer emotional support throughout the ordeal. Family members who have had a stroke themselves showed me it was possible to bounce back from a stroke by developing a new normal.
- The first thing I started to do was to make my bed every day. Just being able to do this gave me a sense of accomplishment and made me feel normal.
- I also helped my son with his homework, more time than not my son would correct me but it forced me to exercise my cognitive skills and to practice the techniques I learned in therapy. Plus as a bonus it provided excellent mommy/ son time.
- Later I joined an affordable gym. Working out gave me a sense of wellness and when I could get into my skinny jeans for the first time in 20 years...I saw the light! It became a part of my daily routine. If the weather did not permit, I would walk up and down the three flights of stairs in my building.
- This combined with eating better; really made a difference to my overall sense of self. Eventually I started to volunteer and seek paid employment.
- I would purposely set my appointments in the morning which helped me to get back into the work routine.
- Lastly I was determined to succeed in my therapy and in life for the sake of my family.