



What is a stroke?

A stroke occurs when a blood clot blocks one of the arteries that carry blood to the brain. This causes a lack of oxygen supply to the brain resulting in brain cells being damaged or destroyed.

Common Symptoms

Numbness

Weakness or paralysis affecting one side of the body, leg, arm or face

Double vision, blurred vision or partial blindness

The severity of a stroke will depend on several factors such as age, fitness levels and which part of the brain was affected.

Outcome

A stroke impairs the Central Nervous System and leaves the person with a loss of motor and sensory functions of the limbs or down one side. A stroke can also;

affect speech

cause mental confusion

cause disjointed movement.

It may also limit range of motion and cause muscular weakness which affects balance.

Exercise recommendations

Participating in exercise after a stroke aims to improve the quality of life (the ability to complete daily activities), improve mobility, motor function and decrease the risk of secondary stroke. Initially stroke patients will receive exercises from a specialist physiotherapist and once these fundamental sessions are complete it is vital to maintain an active lifestyle.

Gentle exercise is the key such as walking, gardening or joining a low impact exercise class; the latter can also help improve social skills. For those that suffer weakness in one side exercise can prevent joints tightening and becoming deformed (contractures). These types of sessions will help improve the cardiovascular fitness. It is also important to increase muscle mass and this can be done with light weights before progressing to heavier weights. Exercises that incorporate leg are core work are essential in order to improve balance.

Lifestyle

Along with keeping active after a stroke, addressing lifestyle habits is important; reducing alcohol intake, quit smoking and ensure to eat a wide variety of healthy foods, cutting down sugary snacks / sweets.

The aim after a stroke is to improve the quality of life and, by exercising and improving overall lifestyle habits this will help person achieve the goal.

For more information visit

<http://www.chss.org.uk/stroke/>

<http://www.bhf.org.uk/>

<http://www.dundee.ac.uk/ise/fun/whatwedo/special.php>

<http://www.abdn.ac.uk/sportandrec/timetables/timetables.php>

<http://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/sport/Classesandcourses/>

<http://www.ugsport.co.uk/health-and-fitness.asp>

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