

A Guide

Choosing a Community Exercise Program After Stroke



Why should I exercise?

Exercising after a stroke can help you:

- Improve your **strength, balance, walking, and endurance**
- Improve **activities of daily living** like getting up from a chair, getting dressed, and making meals
- Help you **participate** in social and leisure activities that are important to you
- Improve your **mood** and feel better
- Improve your **health** and help **prevent** a second **stroke**.

What **type** of exercise **program** should I choose?

- This should depend on your **goals, needs and preferences**.
- Ideally, the program you select should include exercises for **flexibility, strength, balance, and endurance**.
- For people with stroke and mobility challenges, the program should include exercises that involve **practicing everyday functional tasks** like sit-to-stand, stepping, and walking.
- A **group-based** exercise program with other people with stroke can lead to **social interaction and support**.

Before starting an exercise program, **consult** with your **doctor, nurse practitioner, or physical therapist**.

They can identify any **exercise restrictions** you may have.

To help you **choose** an exercise program:

- Book a time to **meet** with the **facility staff** or class instructor.
- **Bring a caregiver or friend**. They can help you decide if the program is right for you.
- **Observe a class** before you sign up.
- Use the **checklist** on the **next page** to help you identify a community exercise program that is right for you. This checklist will be most helpful for people who have **mild to moderate mobility challenges** after stroke.

Choosing a Community Exercise Program After Stroke Checklist

Program Name: _____ Contact: _____

Check (✓) 'yes' or 'no' for each criterion. Ideally, each criterion should be checked 'yes'. If one is 'no', consider how it may affect your ability to participate.

Criteria

	yes	no
The program requires me to be screened by a qualified healthcare professional (e.g., my doctor, nurse practitioner, or physical therapist) to ensure I am safe to participate.		
The program provides information about who is appropriate for this program.		
The program has a screening process that asks about my needs, goals, and abilities to ensure the program is a good fit for me. For example, they ask me about my walking ability, balance, strength, pain, vision, communication, and need for assistance.		
The program includes exercises for flexibility, strength, balance and endurance .		
If I have mobility challenges, the program includes exercises that practice everyday functional tasks such as sit-to-stand, stepping, and walking .		
The program partners with healthcare professionals .		
The program staff :		
• Are trained to respond to emergencies and provide first aid		
• Understand my stroke and other health condition(s)		
• Are trained to provide appropriate exercises for people with stroke		
• Can monitor my exertion and response to exercise		
• Can help me learn how to monitor myself during exercise.		
The facility (e.g., parking, entrance, exercise classrooms, equipment, change rooms, washrooms, and signs) is accessible to me.		
If I need assistance from a caregiver or friend , they can attend at no cost .		
The supervision level of the class is appropriate for my needs (for example, there are enough trained staff and volunteers to adequately supervise all participants and ensure my safety during exercise).		
There is adequate space for participants to exercise safely during the class (including space to exercise, safely walk with mobility aids or use a wheelchair, and something for me to hold onto if I need support during exercises when standing).		
Drinking water is available if needed.		
Flexible payment plans and subsidies are available if needed.		

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