get into sport

a training guide for disabled people
welcome
to the Leonard Cheshire Disability ‘get into sport’ training guide for disabled people.

This guide is designed to provide you with the information that you need to take those, often challenging, first steps to ‘get into sport’, achieve your goals and live your life to the full. It has been produced with the support of a wide range of experts from various organisations involved in sport and exercise in the UK.
Sport is a really important part of my life and I hope it will be for you too.

Just a few short years ago, I watched the 2008 Beijing Paralympics and was inspired by the amazing athletes and their incredible performances to take up sport and to lead an active, healthy lifestyle. At the time I didn’t know exactly what sports I wanted to do or how to get started, but thanks to the support of my friends, family and a fantastic coach, I’m now hoping to compete at the 2012 London Paralympics alongside some of the people I saw on my TV screen just four years ago.

Your goals may not, at least for the moment, be focused on winning medals, which is fine.

Inclusive sport is sport with many of the barriers to disabled people removed. There are lots of disabled people out there being active and enjoying sport alongside their non-disabled teammates, receiving coaching and support from qualified professionals.

I hope that you find the contents of this guide, and the additional information available through the online hub www.lcdisability.org/sport, useful and that very soon you will be enjoying and benefitting from having sport and exercise as part of your life.

Nikki Emerson
Sport can be an extremely fulfilling activity that improves your fitness levels and makes everyday activities easier. It can also help build confidence, leadership, teamwork, improve communication and, just as importantly, it can be fun!
People choose to participate in sport for many reasons. Whatever your motivation is, there are a number of things that you need to consider and plan for in order to achieve your objectives.

One of the most important things to remember is to keep your objectives realistic, including the timescales you give yourself to achieve them.

For example, if you haven’t done much exercise before, or perhaps not for a long time, planning to complete a marathon in just a few weeks time is likely to lead to burn out or injury through over training or disappointment when you fail to achieve this.

It’s much better to set small, manageable goals and build slowly to your ideal objective, like training three times a week for the next four weeks, or being able to complete a mile in less than a set number of minutes. The sense of achievement you gain at reaching each milestone will give you further motivation to continue training and progress to the next one.

The commitment you are making to sport and to training is likely to be a long-term one and mean a change in lifestyle. This requires planning and research.

Using the information here you can find a sport, a club or a facility that suits your needs and you can modify your diet to ensure that your body is prepared for the work you’re going to put it through.

Remember, there will be obstacles along the way, but the sense of reward and achievement will only be enhanced as you overcome them. Stay focused, don’t be afraid to ask for help and support and if you’re not enjoying it, try something different.

The fact that you are reading this means that you’ve overcome your first hurdle, making the decision to get active.

Congratulations! Now let us help you plan the route you want to take.
who can help?

One of the main reasons that people give up training and New Years resolutions don’t even make it to February is a lack of appropriate support, guidance and encouragement. All of which are needed to keep you on path, keep the hurdles you will face realistic and help you up when you stumble and don’t want to carry on.

Training is hard and at times it can feel like too big a challenge. Getting the right information, from the right people and at the right times is vital. Here are some of the key people you may want to consult for support and advice;

friends and family

The people who know you the best will often be best placed to support you. Make sure that your friends and family understand what your goals are and how you plan to achieve them. You may even be the inspiration they need to follow your lead.

medical professionals

 Depending on your impairment and your current level of fitness, you may need to consult your doctor or other professionals like a dietician or physiotherapist before starting your new exercise regime and they may need to be involved throughout as well.
Exercise can place many unforeseen stresses on the body. It is important to seek professional advice to know what is ‘good’ pain (your body responding to the work it’s doing) and when you may need to modify your technique and/or equipment in order to avoid damaging your body.

**Sports Professionals**

Every professional sport is run by an organisation, usually called a governing body, who can provide an array of useful information, from the finer details of what that sport involves, where to find your local club, what equipment you need and where best to buy or borrow it, to simple things like the rules of the game, classification and the basic skills required to participate.

There is a wide selection of disability sports on offer, usually centred around a single or group of impairments. Some, like wheelchair basketball, allow non-disabled people to participate and others have strict classification systems, to group people with similar impairments during competition.

Further information and contact details for these organisations can be found at the back of this guide and the online hub: www.lcdisability.org/sport

**Yoodo Sports**

There are other sources of support as well, like the Yoodo Sports project, which links disabled people with volunteer buddies and provides a number of opportunities for you to get involved in sport. By doing sport with others you can discover the motivation, confidence and independence you need to get active and stay active. Have a look at the website for more information and to find volunteers in your area: www.yoodosports.com
As a result of these laws there have been many improvements. However, steps to entrances, a lack of equipment and staff attitudes are still commonly reported barriers and the level of accessible provision can vary a great deal from one facility to another.

A good way to find the right place to train is to visit or call the gyms, swimming pools and fitness centres in your area to find out what facilities they have. If possible, go and try them out for yourself to make sure they are accessible for you.

As a minimum, you should expect any facility to have adequate accessible parking facilities, access ramps, lifts and automatic/power assisted doors, accessible toilet and changing facilities and staff trained in at least basic disability awareness who are keen to assist you. Talk to the personal trainers and see if they can offer the right help and are trained to work with disabled people.

In addition to visiting or contacting your local facilities to ensure about their accessibility, you can visit the ‘Action for Access’ website www.actionforaccess.org, a campaign led by Leonard Cheshire Disability where you can search for and view reports.
from people in your area who have used those facilities.

If you are not sure what questions to ask look at one of our access surveys. This is not a full access audit but shows some of the key access features that gyms and fitness centres should provide.

Most swimming pools will also have a hoist to help users with physical impairments get into and out of the water. These are often kept in a store room, so don’t be afraid to ask if you don’t see one on the poolside. There are other access facilities available as well, such as removable stairs, ramps and pool floors that can be raised to the same height as the poolside.

The Inclusive Fitness Initiative (IFI), managed by the English Federation of Disability Sports (EFDS), has also been working for a number of years to make gyms, as well as their supporting facilities, more accessible as a whole addressing physical access and policies, fitness equipment, staff training and marketing.

There are approximately 400 IFI Mark gyms which are accredited to either Provisional, Registered or Excellent levels of accreditation depending on their level of access and service provision. In addition to this the IFI influence of fitness equipment suppliers means many other gyms will now have a selection of accessible equipment with features such as tactile, bright coloured controls and moveable seats for wheelchair access.

More information and a list of IFI sites can be found through the EFDS website: www.efds.co.uk
exercising at home

For many people your home will be the place where you feel most comfortable and confident. It is therefore a great place to start exercising - and you don’t need lots of expensive equipment to do it.

There are a lot of exercises that you can do that just use your own body weight, or you can add to the resistance with a few pieces of cheap equipment like dumbbells, gym balls and resistance bands, which can be purchased from popular shops like Argos, Amazon or even from some supermarkets.

You can also add a small amount of resistance using some everyday items. Unopened tins of food or an empty plastic bottle filled with water (1 litre = 1 kg) are great for that first step into weight training and a sturdy dining chair can be used to position yourself for different exercises.

Games consoles like the Nintendo Wii and Playstation Move have also become popular in recent years, offering fun games as well as more serious exercise routines which can be done in your own living room and which can even offer guidance on technique, challenges to complete and provide information on the amount of calories burnt.

There are also a number of websites offering information on different types of exercise and stretching routines. For example:  
www.netfit.co.uk
www.nhs.uk/livewell/fitness
If you are going to exercise at home, make sure that you have a safe environment in which to do so. Give yourself plenty of space to move, make sure you have plenty of grip on the floor and do not undertake any exercise if you are in pain or feeling unwell. If you feel faint, dizzy or unwell while exercising, stop immediately.

**hints and tips**

- Start off gently and work within your comfort zone
- Increase your effort gradually
- Keep your breathing regular, don’t hold your breath
- Focus on technique, not speed

**improving muscle strength**

If you are just starting out, you don’t need a detailed knowledge of the human body and how it works. If you join a gym, the staff will be able to give you more detailed instruction, but the following are examples of simple exercises you can do at home to improve your muscle strength.

**please note:**

all these exercises can be adapted to your mobility needs; please talk to a personal trainer or professional for advice.

**sample exercises for the upper body**

**chest press**

Press ups, with hands shoulder width apart and either on your knees or feet with your body straight like a plank, are a great exercise to work the chest and the back of the arms (triceps).

**shoulder press**

Either standing, or sitting on a sturdy chair for balance, take your hands from by your shoulder and push upwards until the arm is almost straight over your head, also works the triceps, as well as the shoulders. Doing both arms together can help balance and posture.
**bicep curl**

Either standing or sitting on a sturdy chair for balance, let your arms drop to your sides, then bend at the elbow, keeping your upper arm close to your side, bringing your hand towards your shoulder. Doing both arms together can help balance and posture.

**lateral raises**

Hold a weight in each hand and let your arms hang by your sides. Slowly raise both arms together until they are parallel with the floor, then lower them slowly back to your sides.

**sample exercises for the lower body**

**calves**

Perhaps using a wall, chair or kitchen work surface for balance, slowly raising yourself up onto your tiptoes, targets the calf muscles.

**squats**

With your feet shoulder width apart, bend your knees and slowly lower your bum towards your heels, works the big quadriceps muscles on the front of the thigh, and your bum.
sets and reps

When starting out or focusing on general fitness, you should be looking to do around 15 repetitions (reps) of each exercise, having a short rest of 1-2 minutes, then doing the same again, repeat this 2 or 3 times (sets). If this feels too easy, try increasing the weight.

improving your stamina

Any activity that gets your heart rate up and makes you breathe faster and heavier will burn calories and improve your aerobic fitness. Gardening, cleaning and using the stairs are all everyday activities that are also great exercise.

If you want to take your exercise up a notch, it may sound too simple to be effective, but walking/gentle pushing is a great exercise for building your stamina, burning calories and improving your general fitness. You can increase the intensity by changing the distance you cover, your speed and finding routes that involve small hills with a steady incline.

If you feel ready for more intense activity, running and cycling are great ways of starting to develop your lung capacity and stamina. If you’re not, don’t worry, here are some simple exercises that you can do at home that will still get your heart beating faster and make you breathe heavier:

step ups

Using either a step box, or just the bottom step of your stairs, repeatedly step up and down. Increase your speed and the time you do it for to increase the intensity.

marching

As simple as it sounds, standing in one spot, using your arms as well, concentrate on lifting your knees up to the same height as your waist. You can develop this into jogging on the spot for more intensity.

arms

A great way of warming up your muscles and raising your heart rate is lots of repetitions of movements such as punching in front of you or above your head (one arm at a time), raising your arms straight up to the sides or pointing your arms straight out to the sides and then making circular motions with your hands, changing directions every so often.

When you are ready for a new challenge and want to improve your fitness further, an exercise bike is a relatively cheap piece of equipment that doesn’t take up too much room. There is also a whole range of home cardio equipment available, including treadmills, rowing machines, cross trainers, handbikes and recumbent cycles that you could use to enhance your home exercise routine. The build quality and features of this equipment can vary a great deal, so shop around, do some research and find a machine that matches your needs.
where to start?

Writing down what you are going to do is always a good motivator and a sensible approach to planning. These three basic steps should help you outline your first few workouts, which can be modified and developed in order to make sure that the intensity matches your ability and you keep challenging yourself and generating improvements.

step 1
warm-up and stretching

A warm up should do exactly that - make you feel warm and get your muscles ready to exercise, helping avoid injuries. It should be at least 5-10 minutes of moderate exercise. This should be well within your comfort zone, but raise your heart rate and make you breathe more heavily.

Stretching can help improve the flexibility of your muscles and prepare them for the work they are about to do. Focus on the muscles you are about to work, hold each stretch for 20-30 seconds and breathe steadily throughout.

step 2
workout

Write down what exercises, sets and reps you plan to do and what weights you will use.

The intensity of your workout is important and should be specific to you. If you are already quite active and strong, then you will need a tougher, longer workout than someone who currently does little to no exercise. Exercise works by pushing your body beyond what it normally does, your body then responds by improving your lung capacity, the efficiency of your heart and the strength of your muscles. Every workout should feel challenging and as your fitness improves, you should increase the length of your workout, how fast you run/ cycle/ step, the distance you cover and the weights that you lift, to keep the intensity at that same level. An easy workout might feel tempting sometimes, but it is not productive.

step 3
cool down and stretching

Just as it’s important to warm up before exercising, it’s also important to cool down and stretch the muscles you’ve worked to help your body recover and keep things like muscle soreness and stiffness to a manageable level.
diet and nutrition

Eating right is an important part of being fit for life. A healthy and well-balanced diet will help to improve health, prevent disease and improve exercise performance.

All the food we eat can be divided into key food groups. Try to choose a variety of different foods from the first three groups.

carbohydrates

Rice, bread, potatoes, pasta, breakfast cereals, root vegetables

- Main energy provider for your brain and working muscles
- Should make up about half your plate at each meal
fruits and vegetables

- Great source of vitamins and minerals, essential to keep your body functioning well
- Aim for 5 portions each day – think variety and colour!
- 1 portion = 2 small fruits (plum, Satsuma), 1 medium fruit (apple, pear), 1 tbsp dried fruit, 3 tbsp vegetables (carrots, peas, beans)

protein

lean meat, fish, eggs, low fat dairy, tofu, nuts

- Vital for muscle growth and repair
- Try to eat a source of protein at each meal
- Choose lower fat versions where possible

fats

- Provides energy, protection and insulation
- Avoid too many high fat foods like cake, visible meat fat, fried food and crisps
- Try lower fat products such as low fat milk
- Eat some ‘good’ fats like oily fish, olive oil, nuts
fluid

water, juice, tea, soft drinks, soup, fruit.

- Water makes up over half the mass of your body and is needed for maintenance and growth.
- Most people require about 1.5-2 litres of fluid each day, although this increases in hot weather and when exercising.

Other food groups like fibre, calcium and iron are also important in a balanced and healthy diet. Alcohol is not needed and contains no essential nutrients but is high in calories and has a negative effect on your ability to train and perform. Keep consumption low and try to use low calorie mixers or soda water.
weight control

Losing or controlling your weight can be a very challenging physical and psychological process which relies on the balance between the energy you consume (food and drink) and the energy that you use (daily physical activity and training).

The first diagram (figure 1) shows how eating/drinking more energy than you use results in weight gain.

The second diagram (figure 2) explains how eating/drinking less energy than you use results in weight loss.

Key:
P.A. = Physical Activity
BMR = Basal Metabolic Rate or the amount of energy you use at rest, just to keep your body functioning.
Food

- **Eat** plenty of fruits, vegetables and starchy carbohydrates as they tend to have a more filling effect. Energy expenditure will determine the amount you need.
- **Snack** on quality carbohydrate and proteins. Try vegetable sticks with hummus/cottage cheese, cheese, ham and pineapple sticks, fruit and yoghurt or nuts. Activity levels will determine how many snacks you can eat.
- **Choose** low fat versions of foods such as margarine, milk, cheese and dressings.
- **Think** about your portion sizes as well as the content of your meals.
- **Use** lower fat cooking methods such as steaming, grilling or microwaving.
- **Remove** the skin & visible fat from meat.
- **Plan** your meals – don’t let regular sport get in the way of eating well!

Drink

- **Drink** sufficient fluid before, during and after exercise. The aim is to keep hydrated and produce pale, straw coloured urine. Regular small sips are better than large gulps.
- If you’re not keen on water, try adding a squeeze of lemon or lime or a small amount of sugar free cordial. Milk is a good drink for after exercise.
- **Talk** to your GP, or a registered dietician or sports nutritionist for further advice and help regarding weight control.

Further information can be found on the online hub [www.lcdisability.org/sport](http://www.lcdisability.org/sport) or obtained from websites like the NHS Choices [http://www.nhs.uk/livewell/healthyeating/Pages/Healthyeating.aspx](http://www.nhs.uk/livewell/healthyeating/Pages/Healthyeating.aspx).

If you have any particular dietary requirements or concerns, you should consult your GP before starting any diet or rigorous programme of exercise.

**Key:**
- P.A. = Physical Activity
- BMR = Basal Metabolic Rate or the amount of energy you use at rest, just to keep your body functioning.
goal setting

Goal setting is the process of establishing a performance target to be met within a given time period. Goals are important in sport to keep you motivated and interested even when the going gets tough.

Keep your goals bite-size, personal and realistic. It’s still good to have long-term goals like completing a triathlon, running a marathon or competing in the Paralympics, but achieving smaller goals at regular intervals will help keep you on course, boost your motivation and give you that desire to achieve the next one.

If you are just starting out, your goal might be to attend the gym, have a workout 3 times a week or do 10 minutes on your exercise bike. You can ‘tick’ off your sessions on a calendar and give yourself a reward for achieving it.

After maybe a few weeks, review your goals and how well you’ve done and revise them to reflect your performance. If your goals were too difficult, lower them, if you achieved every one, make the challenge that little bit harder.

mental fitness

Sport and exercise can be hard work and the last thing you feel like doing after a long day at work or when the sun is shining or your favourite TV programme is about to start. Having the right attitude and motivation are as important to achieving your goals as having the right equipment.
key aspects of goal setting

- Be clear – include specific numbers/distances/times, writing them down is like confirming your commitment
- Be realistic – you want a high success rate, so make sure your goals are challenging but achievable
- Review your performance – did you do it? Great, now think about making your goal harder next week/month,
- Celebrate – when planning your goals also plan your reward. Be strict with yourself if you do fail, it will also ensure you try extra hard next week

when to exercise

Some people get up early and go to the gym or for a run before they go to work or college, others prefer to exercise at the end of the day. Everyone is different and finding a time that’s right for you can make a big difference. If you struggle to get up in the morning or don’t function until mid-day, then an early morning session is probably not for you. Make sure you also allow enough time, feeling rushed and not focusing on what you are doing will affect your performance.

A poor workout can have the opposite effect to what you want, it can demotivate you and attach negative feelings towards the activity.

If you don’t feel like exercising it’s often best not to. That’s not an excuse to be lazy, you should learn what emotions help you to exercise and which don’t. It can be quite therapeutic if you are feeling stressed or angry to spend some time focusing on something else for a while. Make a conscious effort to block out anything that isn’t related to your workout, focus on your goals and remind yourself why you are doing this.

If you find yourself dreading your next session, this can be a good indicator that you need to make some changes, perhaps try a new sport or go for a walk, or bike ride instead.

think positive

It might be a lot easier to say than it is to do, but focusing on keeping your thoughts positive can really improve your performance.

Try not to think about all of the things that could go wrong or how you will feel if you don’t achieve your goals. Concentrate on what it is that you want to achieve, what a positive thing you are doing and how proud you will feel when you’ve done it.

This can be supported by a technique called ‘self-talk’, actually saying positive statements out loud. It can be motivational (Keep going!) or instructional (Speed up!) and can really help maintain your intensity during training.

relaxation skills

An important part of your exercise schedule should be learning how to relax. Stress and anxiety can affect your physical wellbeing as well as your motivation and performance.
If you are nervous about joining a new club, going to the gym or taking part in a competition, taking some time out to relax can help prepare you. Try finding a quiet space, closing your eyes and visualising a relaxing setting such as a beach. Breathe deeply and slowly and block out any thoughts about what you are about to do. Music can also help you to relax. Choose some slower, soothing songs to listen to either in the car or through headphones on your portable music player. Switching to something with a faster beat can also help motivate you once you get started.

**training intensity**

An important principle of any exercise is how hard you work, in other words, how intense it is. Pushing yourself too hard can lead to burnout and injury, but if you don’t work hard enough you won’t improve your fitness.

A common way of measuring intensity is using a heart rate monitor, but certain impairments, such as spinal cord injuries, will affect your ability to elevate your heart rate to the expected levels.

A more simple way to monitor your training intensity is by using a scale called the rating of perceived exertion (RPE), whereby you rate the intensity of your workout according to how you feel.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>very, very light</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>very light</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>fairly light</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>somewhat hard</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>hard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>very hard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>very, very hard</td>
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rating of perceived exertion (RPE)
Writing down what you plan to do and what you actually do is a great way to control your development and motivate you. When building a training plan, there are six key principles that you should consider:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>specificity</strong></th>
<th><strong>overload</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Training must be relevant to your desired outcome</td>
<td>Intensity, duration, frequency. Training must induce fatigue</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>variation</strong></th>
<th><strong>adaptation or recovery</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>Don’t get hooked on one or two session designs. Be creative!</td>
<td>To improve performance your body and mind must adapt. These effects take time and you must make space in your programme for recovery.</td>
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<th><strong>reversibility</strong></th>
<th><strong>progression</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>If you stop training for long periods (&gt;2 weeks) you will begin to detrain and return to your natural levels. Individuals will detrain at different rates.</td>
<td>Training sessions and plans must be progressive. DO NOT repeat the same session every week.</td>
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When creating sessions within your training programme the specificity, overload and progression are closely related. A training session needs to;

- Fulfil a specific role in your training programme
- Challenge you in some way, pushing your boundaries
- Progress over time, not necessarily every session, but over time

If you get to a point where you don’t feel like you are progressing, looking back over your training, it can remind you of just how far you have come and motivate you to keep working.
As with most things in life, training is easier when you have someone to lead the way. The following real stories are designed to introduce you to some people who perhaps not too long ago were in a similar position to you. They have since taken up sport and exercise and experienced success at quite a high level.

Even if your goals aren’t to win medals and compete in races and competitions, their stories should help show you just how far you could go and what a positive role sport and exercise can have on your life.
In 2008 I was driving back from Oxford University, where I was studying neuroscience and psychology, when I had a near-fatal car crash. My car flipped over and the seat slammed me into the steering wheel. It took three hours for the fire brigade to cut me free, during which time I lost feeling in my legs due to breaking my spine at T10, level with the bottom of my ribs. As a result I became paralysed from the waist down and spent 10 weeks at Stoke Mandeville National Spinal Injuries Centre undergoing intensive physiotherapy and hydrotherapy. I was told I’d never walk again and had to adapt to life in a wheelchair.

During this time in hospital I watched the Beijing Paralympics and was inspired to take up Paralympic sport by the athletes I saw on screen. I now compete against these athletes internationally and still get star struck occasionally!

After a few months training with GB Rowing alongside finishing my degree I went to a British Paralympic Association talent-spotting day where my potential in athletics was recognised and after a visit to the BPA Fast Track Power and Performance training camp from Dr Ian Thompson and Baroness Tanni Grey-Thompson, I was persuaded to try wheelchair racing.
My first race was the Silverstone half marathon where I qualified for the 2009 London marathon which was taking place six weeks later. After being given a bespoke racing wheelchair by Wheelpower I came fourth in the 2010 London Marathon and won four medals at the 2010 U23 World Track Championships.

In 2011 I won the Great Manchester 10k and achieved the IPC Paralympic A Standards which qualified me for London 2012 in the T53 100m, 200m, 400m and 800m. At the end of the season I was ranked number 1 in Britain for these distances and ranked in the top 10 in the world. I was also selected for the Great Britain Paratriathlon Squad.

This year I hope to be selected for the London 2012 Paralympic Games and improve on my personal best times over all those distances. I would also like to complete a Paratriathlon towards the end of the year as I have had to put this on the back burner until London 2012 is over.

In addition to racing I am a Trustee of SportsAid, a WheelPower Ambassador and I speak at schools and corporate events. I am passionate about promoting sport for health and enjoyment, especially among disabled people.
I was a very active child and enjoyed participating in a lot of different sports, including football, hockey, rugby and athletics.

When I was a teenager I had septicaemia and as a result I now have a movement disorder called dystonia which affects my muscles.

I still want to be active and as well as regular aquatic therapy sessions, I have played wheelchair football and boccia and enjoy cycling. Learning how to ride a bike outside again was a big challenge and the support of the physiotherapy team and the staff and volunteers at the lodge where I live has been really important to me.

When I started training for my first ‘Tri Together’ event, organised by Leonard Cheshire Disability, I felt really nervous, but I particularly enjoyed swimming and splash cycling which helped to build up my stamina and endurance.

The team at my lodge supported and encouraged me to get up early for training every day which included swimming managed by our great physiotherapy team and supported by our wonderful team of dedicated volunteers who also helped me with my weight training in the gym. We all had to pull together as a team in order to make this dream a reality for me. I will never forget the sense of achievement I felt when crossing the finish line thanks to my hard work and determination and that of the team at Gloucestershire House, the Leonard Cheshire Disability home where I live.

Sport and exercise have been an important part of my physiotherapy and treatment, but it’s also something that I really enjoy. I would strongly recommend everyone to ‘Get Into Sport’ and start enjoying the benefits.

My advice to others who are thinking of getting active or taking up sport for the first time is DO IT!
It was really at boarding school in Hampshire, where, thanks to the specialist support I received, I developed my confidence and personality. I was born with cerebral palsy, I also have a hearing impairment and initially I had difficulty at school because of my dyslexia.

I got involved in sport at school, thanks to a brilliant PE teacher, and really enjoyed helping out with the coaching as much as competing. I soon decided that athletics was the sport for me after I was talent spotted by UK Athletics at an event in Blackpool. That day I was doing every event – things like the shot, discus and long jump – just wearing a t-shirt and trainers. I hadn’t done any training but I won the running events and someone must have thought: “he’s got talent”.

I now compete in the 100m and 200m and won a silver medal at the 2008 Beijing Paralympics and I’m hoping to go one better in London 2012. I don’t remember too much about the final in Beijing, I had a broken bone in my foot and just 30 minutes before the race I’d passed out following a local anaesthetic. What I do remember is visiting the Queen at Buckingham Palace shortly after the Paralympics and resisting the urge to do donuts as I drove up in my Mini!
I’m definitely not a morning person, so most of my training takes place in the evenings. I mix time on the track with workouts in the pool and sessions in the gym. I also spend a lot of time with the physio - every athlete has to do that or their bodies would fall apart!

I don’t really have sporting idols, instead I look to people like Martin Luther King – someone who could motivate people and get them behind a cause. I am motivated to do well for myself, but I also feel a massive responsibility towards my coach, Rob Ellchuk. A big part of the reason I turn up for training is because of him.

You could argue that sport isn’t really important, that it’s just entertainment. But I think it’s so much more than that. It teaches you about winning and losing and fair play – it gives you life experiences and it brings people together. Sport has helped me in so many ways but most notably it has given me a purpose, something to work really hard for and be proud of.
I was always very sporty and active before the accident that led to my disability and although it had destroyed my self-esteem and my sense of who I was, I knew that keeping active was a good way of helping my depression and coping with the pain.

My consultants and physiotherapists were also keen that I stay involved in sport so, as a wheelchair user, I now had to look for suitable and challenging disability sports. As well as wanting to go back to the sports I’d enjoyed before, I tried a wide variety of new sports including wheelchair rugby and wheelchair curling. Having always been a keen skier I also did a lot of downhill skiing with Disability Snowsport UK, using a mono sit ski. I love the freedom it gives me and being a speed freak, love flying off the bumps!

My first big challenge was inspired by my friends who were doing the Glasgow half marathon. I managed to get a race chair just a few weeks before and with virtually no training I somehow made it round the 13 miles. Around the same time I went along to a handcycling demo event and acquired my first handbike. I now had the kit I needed to run and cycle and as my friends were already competing in triathlons, feeling a bit left out, I thought I’d give it a go.

My first Triathlon was in 2009 and the Local Council running the event were happy to make some accommodations in order for me to take part. Thanks to my dreadful arms only breaststroke and near flat tyres on my handcycle, I came a not so impressive last. Inspired by my partner, Melville, and our friends who regularly take in the most
extraordinary sports challenges, I didn’t give up, continued to train and in 2010 became Paratriathlon British, European and World Champion. I managed to retain my European and World titles in 2011 and so far in 2012, I have, again, kept my European title. I am looking forward to the 2012 World Championships which take place in October in New Zealand.

My other big inspiration is my coach, John Dargie, who works immensely hard and has always been very enthusiastic about working with me and figuring out how we could adapt things to suit my individual needs. He sees me as an athlete first and my impairment second and even though I’m not able to stick to a training plan, we make the most of my good days and take things one day at a time.

My advice to people just starting out is to find a sport that you enjoy training for as well as competing. Do your research, there is a fantastic amount of information on websites and in magazines including all sorts of different training programmes, so there will always be something that suits your lifestyle and individual needs. If you are serious about competing at a high level, find a good coach or join a club, they are usually very keen to welcome new members. The other athletes I train with and compete against inspire me to keep going and to train harder.

Sports like triathlon can be quite intimidating, but focus on the personal challenge and view race days as simply an opportunity to put your training into practice. Be prepared, make sure your equipment is up to the task and you know what to expect from the course, including change-overs. Punctures are an unavoidable horror for wheelchair users, so check your tyres are in good condition and don’t forget to inflate them!

Smile, relax and enjoy the race – you are there to have fun!
John Proctor

My illness started in 1992-93 when I began losing a lot of weight and swallowing foods and liquids became difficult. After many operations to do with my oesophagus, stomach and intestines, and specialist advice from doctors from around the world, I received the devastating news that my doctors could not cure me. Worse still, they couldn’t identify my illness; I was the only one in the world with this condition and in this instance, being unique was not a good thing. This was a very difficult time for me and I became quite depressed which began to impact on my wife and two children.

My social worker introduced me to my local Leonard Cheshire Disability home in Timsbury called Greenhill House which is a care home for disabled people, providing support for both live in and day care residents. This is where I started gardening and doing arts and crafts. Over time a woodwork shop started, which is actually a hobby of mine, so this was wonderful news to me. I was delighted when they asked me to run the woodwork shop, which I now do as a volunteer on a weekly basis. In return
for all the help and support Greenhill House gave me through this difficult time, I decided I would like to give something back, and that’s why I decided to do the Bath Half Marathon to raise some money for them. As a teenager I was used to doing local half marathons so I was no stranger to running but this would be the first time since my illness and being a wheelchair user to do anything like this. It was going to be a big challenge for me. My training was gradual and started on the grounds of the Bath and West showground, away from traffic on safe cycle paths. I was lucky enough to have the support from a bloke called Mike Knight who really encouraged me and would also be entering the race as well. However, I had one problem, sourcing a sports wheelchair to hire for the event was a real struggle but Ann, the volunteer coordinator at Greenhill House was a great help in publicising my challenge. On the day, I had to contend with issues like runners wearing head phones meaning they could not hear me calling out when I was coming behind them, but on the plus side the crowds cheered and clapped the whole way which really lifted my spirits and kept me going. The last mile was the hardest of all but there was a real a buzz in the air, which helped me get to the finish line and what a feeling that was. I was over the moon, wow wow wow!!! Now I’m even thinking maybe next year I’ll do it again!!!
Swimming is a great exercise that works the whole body, but for the same reason, it can also be very hard work. Developing a good technique will make moving through the water much easier as well as quicker. For that reason, if you aren’t already a competent swimmer, you may want to start with some lessons. Most pools will offer adult swimming lessons and many also have one-to-one lessons, which can be arranged at a time to suit you.
If you feel confident in your swimming ability and want to focus on building up your stamina, one of the most important things to do is find the sessions that are most suited to your needs. Pools will usually offer sessions like adults only, 50 plus, lane swimming, early birds, women/men only which are likely to be best if you want to swim lengths with the minimum disruption. Some of these may be very busy though and swimming in lanes will usually involve swimming up one side and down the other. Lanes are typically only two metres wide and if your stroke requires a wide space, or if you need a guide swimmer, you may find it difficult to safely pass others swimming in the opposite direction. During a quiet session it may be possible for you to have a lane to yourself.

There are a wide range of swimming floats and aids available, some of which will be available to borrow or buy from your local pool, to help you target certain aspects of your stroke or just support you in the water.

Kickboards are designed to be held so that you can just work your legs, pullbuoys fit between your legs, so that you can just work your arms and woggles are large foam tubes which have a variety of uses in supporting the body. These and many others come in a variety of different sizes, shapes and colours, so shop around to find ones that best fit your needs and personality.
Swimming pools vary a lot in their size, design and even the temperature of the water. If you have a choice of pools within traveling distance, do some research and find which one is best suited to your needs.

Most rectangular pools will be 25m, 33.3m or even 50m long and anywhere from 10m to 20m wide. This is important when creating your exercise programme, if you are planning to swim 100m, is this two, three or four lengths?

Some pools are deck level, which means the surface of water is level with the side of the pool, making them easier to climb into and out of. Others have a freeboard, usually of around 25-30cm, where the poolside is higher than the surface of the water. Entry to either type is usually via steps in the corners, but most pools will also have a hoist available to lower people into the water. If you can’t see a hoist, ask a member of staff, they are often kept in a store room. If you need to use the hoist you may also want to tell the receptionist as you enter, so that it can be set up whilst you get changed.

Pool water temperatures are typically 29-30°C, which may feel cold at first, but should warm up once you start swimming. Some pools will have sessions where the pool is heated to 32 degrees, so if you need this make sure you enquire at your fitness facility to find out what they offer. If you have problems regulating your own body temperature you may want to consider wearing some form of tight fitting clothing, like a rash vest. A lot of pools will have quite strict policies on acceptable swimwear, so discuss this with the staff beforehand.
training programmes

The programme you choose should reflect your objectives. A lot of people will have a set amount of lengths that they do each time they go swimming, which is fine if you are training to swim long distances. To help tackle the boredom of ploughing up and down the pool each day, you could challenge yourself to beat your previous time for swimming a set distance.

Like most sports though, breaking the whole activity down into smaller elements and focusing on them individually can help improve your stamina and technique. For example, following a warm up, you might do so many lengths using your legs only, followed by so many lengths using your arms only, before another set of full stroke.

If you want to improve your speed, you could try swimming 50m as fast as you can, having a short rest, then doing it again. By doing this repeatedly within a set amount of time, which allows you to catch your breath, but not fully recover, will challenge your stamina and rate of recovery. The faster you swim, the longer you get to recover!

If you are able to and it fits your goals, you could also vary the type of stroke that you use. Different swimming strokes use different muscles and pose different challenges to your breathing.

For more information on swimming programmes, you can also visit the Amateur Swimming Association website and find information on their free ‘Swimfit’ scheme; www.swimming.org/swimfit

swimming clubs

Joining a swimming club can be a great way to take your training to the next level and get the professional support that you need. A lot of clubs will also have a Masters session for adult members. Either ask at your local pool for information about the clubs that use their facilities or check the Amateur Swimming Association (ASA) website for a list of clubs in your area; www.swimming.org/asa
One of the added benefits of cycling is that it allows you to control the intensity through the use of gears, helping to avoid injury. But before you dust off your old bike and get straight out on the roads, you need to make sure that you are mentally and physically ready for the challenge. It can be a very relaxing and enjoyable activity, but to avoid any major problems you need to plan ahead.

If you have never cycled before, or not for a very long time you need to consider the muscles that will be used and the level of

**cycling**

Cycling is a great form of exercise and method of transport that’s good for the environment and also gives you a sense of freedom. Whether you want to cycle to work, to the shops or to help improve your fitness, there will be a size and type of bike to suit your needs.
balance required. Having a good selection of gears will make tackling any inclines easier, but make sure that your chain is well oiled and the changes are smooth and controlled. You might want to take your bike to be serviced at a specialist bike shop to ensure that it’s safe to use and all of the important features like breaks and tyres are in good condition. You should also have a puncture repair kit, a pump and a selection of basic tools to take with you, in case you do encounter a problem whilst out on your bike.

If you don’t feel physically ready to start cycling, try using an exercise bike for a few weeks first, to build up the muscles involved. Once you do feel ready, start off simply, on a flat, smooth surface with plenty of room and no traffic around and just spend a few minutes cycling around, practicing changing gears and turning. Your local park may be a good place to do this. Build up the distance gradually, add some small hills and make sure that you feel confident with the basic control of the bike before you venture further from home or onto busy roads. Cycling with friends can also add to the enjoyment and reduce any fear or anxiety you may have.

If your impairment means that you struggle with balance, there are a range of tricycles available. The third wheel provides a much more stable bike that still provides the same exercise and freedom of a bicycle.

There are other variations available as well, to suit other types of impairment; including tandem cycles for someone with a visual impairment, hand cycles for someone with reduced function in their legs and handcycle attachments for the front of wheelchairs.

If you need any help choosing the right bike, or want to try cycling in a supportive environment with professional guidance, visit www.cycling.org.uk and find your nearest ‘Wheels For All’ centre.
handcycling

Handcycling is exactly what it sounds like, a bike that is powered by your hands and arms, rather than your legs, with the user positioned closer to the ground. As well as being great exercise, it’s a very efficient form of manual propulsion, which makes it a good alternative to a wheelchair for longer distances.

A number of different types of handcycle are available to suit people with different impairments and to reflect the type of use; recreational or competition. The sitting position varies from kneeling to lying almost flat. As well as being comfortable, the design of the bike should reflect the active muscles of the user.

As with most new activities, handcycling is likely to seem like very hard work when you first start out. If you want to do some preparation or just want to improve your speed and endurance, then focus on building muscle mass and endurance. A lot of fitness suites will now have handcycles, which can help you get used to the action and build up your stamina. However, there’s no substitute for the real thing and your perseverance will pay off and present you with a new world of opportunities, whether you are interested in racing, long
distance cycling or fancy something a bit more extreme, like off-road!

The general maintenance and use of a handcycle is very similar to a traditional bicycle. A helmet and high visible clothing are strongly recommended, as are some form of eye shield and a good pair of gloves. The lower position of the rider does make you less visible to other road users, cycling in groups helps tackle this as several cyclists are more visible than one. For the same reason, a lot of handcycles feature a brightly coloured flag on a raised pole. Mudguards are also advisable to protect yourself and cyclists behind you in wet weather.

Handcycles have two independent brakes and must have a bell or a horn. Punctures and cable failures are the most common maintenance issue, so users should have a good knowledge of their own handcycle and be prepared with replacements and repair kits.

Your pre-cycle checklist should also include plenty of fluid to replace those you will lose, a fully charge a mobile phone in case you find yourself in difficulty and food or at least a snack if you are planning a long ride. Your clothing should obviously reflect the forecasted weather conditions, but a lightweight waterproof jacket is always good to have with you. You may also want to take a map and lights for the front and back of your handcycle.

The Handcycling Association of the United Kingdom (HCAUK) can offer further advice and assistance on getting started and entering competitions. www.handcycling.org.uk
Many people believe that running is one of the most accessible sports available because all you need is a pair of trainers and you can set off round the local park. Whilst this is true to a certain extent, many people who take up running also don’t last long and quickly suffer with injuries.

The following information is designed to help you run and develop your training safely as well as provide you with some useful tips to get the most success and enjoyment.

**footwear**

You don’t need much equipment for running, but a good pair of trainers is worth investing in. Choose trainers specifically designed for running and make sure you try them on. They should give good ankle support and feel solid when you plant your foot. There should be no sensation of unnatural twisting or bending. Have a good walk around in them, even a little jog, and make sure they don’t rub. A good pair of socks will also help you to avoid blisters.
**run and train within your comfort zone**

Most people will over-train when they first start running, pushing the body too hard before it’s had chance to adjust to this new activity. Start slowly and listen to your body. Allow time for recovery between sessions and stop if something hurts or feels uncomfortable.

**running partners**

A lot of people find training in a group or with a friend of a similar ability and who has similar goals helps with motivation. Athletics clubs can be a good place to find a suitable exercise partner. You can also register at www.yoodosports.com which links disabled people with volunteer buddies.

If you have a visual impairment you can run with a partner using a loose tether, such as shoelace or short length of rope held in one hand. This may take some practice to get used to, but the other person can also offer verbal guidance as well as being a constant source of motivation.

**have a running goal**

Having something to aim for can help keep you motivated and focused. What that goal is will also affect the type of training that you should be doing. If you want to be a sprinter, your training will be very different compared to someone who wants to run a marathon. Make sure that you keep your goals personal and realistic, such as running a personal best and giving yourself enough time to develop your abilities.

**running goal related tips**

Running can be divided into three sections, relating to the distances involved; long distance (Marathon/ half marathon), middle distance (800m, 1500m) and sprinting (100m, 200m). Which one of these your goal falls into will affect how you train.
The most common risks to people aiming to run long distances are being too focused on volume and not enough on technique. Your early training should focus on getting your technique right, which will allow you to progress more quickly and with less risk of injury.

Long distance runners focus on endurance, at relatively low intensity, whereas sprinters focus on high intensity and low endurance. Middle distance running involves a difficult, equal focus on both. Overtraining is therefore often the biggest risk to performance as intensity cannot be maintained and emphasis shifts more towards endurance.

Running short distances as fast as possible requires powerful muscles and a real attention to detail. If you want to become a sprinter you need two things, a good pair of specialist, spiked running shoes and a good coach. In this instance, it would usually be best to join an athletics club, who will have coaches and access to running tracks and specialist training equipment. More gym work is also likely to be involved in your training, to help build muscle size and strength.

A directory of clubs can be found at www.british-athletics.co.uk and further information including local running groups can be found at www.runengland.org.uk

You can also find a list of accessible events on the online hub: www.lcdisability.org/sport

Monitor and review your progress
Write down how far or how long you run and when. This will help you to set targets, improve them gradually and review how well you are doing. Measuring your running by time will also give you the flexibility to use different routes and help alleviate the boredom of the same scenery every day. A cheap digital watch with a timer can help you keep track of your session time, so you can focus on your technique.

where to run?

When getting started you ideally want a quiet space with a relatively flat surface. Public parks and lakes can be a great, scenic location with paths offering circular routes and you will probably find a number of like-minded people already doing the same thing.

When you feel ready for a challenge, ‘Parkrun UK’ organise regular, free community based events in parkland surroundings for runners of all abilities www.parkrun.org.uk
Wheelchair racing varies in distance much like running, from a 100m sprint to a marathon. The distance you want to compete at will affect the type of chair that you need and the training that you should do. Sprinting requires big powerful muscles, whilst long distances require cardiovascular endurance and good muscle toning.

Whatever your distance, racing is a very strenuous activity that your body will take time to get used to. Build your training gradually and make sure you allow time for your body to recover between sessions. Muscle soreness and fatigue can be positive signs that your training is working, but over training can lead to injury and setbacks.

Wheelchair racing also puts a lot of strain on the shoulder joints, to avoid injury you should perform rotator cuff exercises to strengthen the smaller muscles that keep the top of your arm firmly attached to the shoulder. These exercises require only very small weights and a plastic bottle filled with water is usually sufficient.

A racing wheelchair is a very expensive and technical piece of equipment. Its use differs from a standard wheelchair because you push with your hand in a fist.
using friction against the pushrim inside the wheel. To protect their hands, racers wear very thick, rigid gloves. These can be expensive, so if you are just starting out, try modifying a strong pair of gardening gloves with lots of athletic and adhesive bandage tape.

The British Wheelchair Racing Association www.BWRA.co.uk can provide information on clubs, coaches and competitions in your area. If you’re not ready to compete, you may want to start by going along to watch a race and speak to some of the athletes.

You can pick up second hand racing wheelchairs, and gloves, from websites like eBay or from some athletics clubs and organisations like Wheelpower www.wheelpower.org.uk and Get Kids Going www.getkidsgoing.com also accept grant applications.
triathlon

Triathlon is a fast growing, dynamic, Paralympic sport and is the perfect cross-training activity as it involves various distances of swimming, cycling and running depending on the event.

It may also surprise you to hear that it’s also one of the most inclusive sports around as well. Some events, such as Leonard Cheshire Disability’s Tri Together triathlon also offer the option of relay team entries meaning you can share the challenge first time round and build up to the three sports.
when should I start my training?

As a guide, you should start training at least 3 months before a short (sprint) distance triathlon. The sooner you start, the easier it will be in the long run.

top tip

Sit down with a calendar and work backwards from the event. This is a great way of planning your training schedule as it helps you clarify the amount of time you have and keeps your motivation up by breaking your training down into achievable goals.

You can just go out and swim, bike/hand-cycle and run/wheelchair propulsion and if you are a complete novice you will probably get a bit fitter. But the process of putting together a good plan means you have to think about what you want to achieve. This alone means you are more likely to be successful.

The main thing to achieve as a beginner triathlete is consistent training alongside enjoyment. You should aim to gradually build up your endurance in all three disciplines, rather than focussing on anything too high intensity or speed-orientated.

If you are new to swimming then working on your swimming technique early on is hugely important. Perhaps finding a swimming coach should be your first step in this instance.

Please note:
Level of disability will determine what exercises individuals can or cannot perform. Therefore individuals with a spinal cord injury (SCI) would focus predominantly on upper body exercises covering the major muscles and level of SCI will affect exercise choices, for example Trunk Control = Abdominals YES, No Trunk Control = Abdominals NO.

NON-SCI individuals can look to utilise all strength and conditioning exercises for the major muscle groups but still adhere to the rule of determining what can be done in relation to your disability.
triathlon training programme: components

There are some fairly obvious key components in a triathlon training programme, whether you are a beginner or a more experienced athlete:

Other elements that are in a well thought out triathlon training plan are:-

1. train two disciplines in sequence
   For example; swim sessions swiftly followed by a cycling session.

2. strength & conditioning sessions
   Not necessarily to build lots of power, are essential in a long term plan, to reduce your risk of injury. There are a wide variety of exercises for strength training and conditioning, including a variety of exercises and cover major muscle groups for Legs, Chest, Back, Shoulders, Arms and Abdominals.

3. recovery
   Make time for recovery in your plan, this is when the adaptations occur!

4. nutrition
   Yes this should be part of your plan. If you are new to training and sport then you will be amazed at how much more you can do with good nutrition. (Please see nutrition section for more information).

5. psychology
   Practicing your mental approach to a race is very important. Many novices comment on how intimidating the start can be, lots of people all looking like they know what they are doing. Planning how to deal with some of the more challenging elements of a race will help you to enjoy and maximise your experience.

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swimming
(1st discipline)

Usually the shortest (in terms of time) however, it is the most technically difficult to master.

cycling / handcycling
(2nd discipline)

Usually the longest stage of the triathlon (in terms of time), requiring the most specialist equipment and with poor setup and lack of practise can be very uncomfortable.

running
(3rd discipline)

Novices who’ve run before taking up triathlon tend to find this section very difficult after the swim and cycle! Training programmes should reflect the need to run after these sections.
which types of training session to use?

The main types of training for performance enhancement are simple:

**endurance (aerobic) - long and continuous sessions**

- These sessions will help develop your ability to become fatigue resistant. They help you to withstand training at a set pace for longer. They can include changes in intensity and pace but it is crucial they remain continuous (no recovery periods within the session).

- When combined effectively with SPEED training, you will go faster for longer!

**speed (anaerobic) - interval training**

- These sessions use short duration blocks of exercise and include recovery periods between exercise blocks to develop your body in ways which will help you go FASTER.

**swimming advice**

The swimming section is sometimes completed in an indoor pool, doing a set number of lengths, and sometimes in open water, swimming between two points and not necessarily in a straight line. This introduces additional concerns regarding temperature, the route that you take, the quality of the water and how you will enter and exit. A good wetsuit is essential and you will need to train wearing it as it will affect your stroke. You also need to think about quickly removing it when you finish the swim and transition into the cycle/handcycle section.

**triathlon coaching**

If you don’t have access to a fitness coach, joining a running or triathlon club is a good idea. Not only will you be able to meet new people, you can get loads of advice from people who have done events like this before. For a list of local triathlon clubs, visit the British Triathlon website: www.britishtriathlon.org

**Tri Together**

In 2011, Leonard Cheshire Disability launched Tri Together, a short distance triathlon uniquely designed so disabled and non-disabled people can swim, bike and run together. With accessibility and inclusion at the heart of the event, Tri Together provides the perfect challenge for those who want to try out one of the individual sports in a relay team or the whole triathlon on their own,

If you are just thinking about getting started, Leonard Cheshire Disability provides free triathlon taster sessions in the run up to their Tri Together triathlon. These provide an excellent opportunity to get advice from experienced triathlon coaches and try out adapted cycles and sports wheelchairs.

For more information visit about taking part in the event or attending the taster sessions visit www.lcdisability.org/tritother
We hope that this guide provides you with the information and inspiration to take up, enjoy and benefit from sport and exercise.

In addition to the examples covered within this guide, there is a wide variety of different inclusive activities that you should be able to access alongside other disabled and non-disabled people. There are also many disability sports, designed specifically for people with certain impairments.

Do some research, have a go at a few different sports and find the one that meets your objectives and most importantly, that you enjoy.

The ‘Sources of further information’ section of this guide and the online hub www.lcdisability.org/sport provide a good starting point if you want to do some further research.

Thank you and good luck!
sources of further information

Leonard Cheshire Disability
A charity campaigning for change and providing innovative services to give disabled people the opportunity to live life their way.
www.lcdisability.org
Tel.020 3242 0200

Leonard Cheshire Disability’s Online Sports Hub
www.lcdisability.org/sport

Tri Together Triathlon
An inclusive and family friendly triathlon uniquely designed for disabled and non-disabled people to take part side by side.
www.lcdisability.org/tritogther
Tel. 0203 242 0239

Yoodo Sports
An exciting and inclusive project and website linking disabled people with volunteer buddies to get fit and healthy.
www.yoodosports.com
Tel.08456 717173

Action for access
Campaign to improve access for disabled people, includes a list of accessible facilities.
www.actionforaccess.org
Tel. 020 3242 0410

Sport England
Can provide a list and contact details for the Governing Bodies of Sport.
www.sportengland.org
Tel.08458 508508

English Federation of Disability Sport
The national body responsible for developing sport for disabled people in England. Their work includes the Inclusive Fitness Initiative and EFDS Events.
www.efds.co.uk
Tel.01509 227750

Disability Rights UK
A charity working to support the rights of disabled people formed through a unification of Disability Alliance, Radar and National Centre for Independent Living.
www.disabilityrightsuk.org
Tel.020 7250 3222

British Paralympics Association
Information on the sports featured in the Paralympics.
www.paralympics.org.uk
Tel.020 7842 5789

Wheelpower
The national organisation for wheelchair sport in the UK. They also provide funding for manual and sports wheelchairs.
www.wheelpower.org.uk
Tel.01296 395995

The Peter Harrison Centre for Disability Sport, Loughborough University
This centre translates research findings in areas such as training strategies and wheelchair configuration into practical outputs and guidelines for practitioners and participants to help improve health, well-being and performance in disability sport.
www.peterharrisoncentre.org.uk
Tel. 01509226387
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British Triathlon www.britishtriathlon.org

Handcycling UK www.handcycling.org.uk

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David Cartlidge www.MIEtraining.com

Designed by the Everything Everywhere internal studio.

health warning

Experts advise that you should see your GP before starting a new exercise programme if you:

• Have not done any exercise for 10 years or more
• Are over 40
• Have a heart problem
• Have high or low blood pressure
• Have joint problems
• Take painkillers or any other drugs regularly
• Have back problems
• Are very overweight or very underweight
• Are prone to headaches, fainting or dizziness
• Have a resting heart rate that exceeds 100 beats a minute
• Have any other medical condition which could interfere with your taking part in an exercise programme