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## “Fitness for people with inhibitors”

with Strength and Conditioning Specialist and Chairperson of the Irish Haemophilia Society Mr John Stack

# REDUCED MOBILITY AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

**For people with severe consequences of having an inhibitor it is a little bit more complicated, and it really does need to start with a physiotherapist or a specialist who can guide you through your particular circumstance.**

the water.

So the answer to the question is – as young as possible!

### Should the factor treatment be given before swimming?

Depending on the physical intensity of what you are doing, certainly, there is need to align the days you get your treatment with the days you do your sports.



If you are wheelchair-bound and you need to get exercise, outside the structured environment, such as swimming pool or physiotherapy, there is not a lot that you can do. One of the things is to **actively use the wheelchair, e.g. by being outdoors and pushing yourself in your wheelchair.** Again, there is the **cleaning and other housework** that can help you to stay active even when wheelchair bound.

**We need to get into a habit to be sitting up tall.**

I suppose, in a wheelchair you tend to slouch a little bit instead of sitting in a good posture. We all tend to sit like this and it does do a damage to our bodies. If you are

sitting in a wheelchair, **it is important that you sit up in a good posture, because it allows you to have greater lung capacity.**

When you are slouching, your diaphragm and your rib cage are pressed in and you do not have good lung capacity, while when you sit up straight – you do.

Let us move away from the wheelchair for a second and talk about sitting population – this is the whole population, everybody. Our backs are weak and our fronts are tight, we are hunched over. In order to correct that **we need to do a lot of exercise for our back, to fix our posture.** And even if you are in a wheelchair, you need to do that type of work as well.

Simple things that are cheap and easy to do this type of exercise are resistance bands (you can get them on Amazon, or in Lidl or Aldi).



Finally, if you are wheelchair-bound, you are not always in a wheelchair, and your legs work reasonably well most of the time. There are exercises that you can do to strengthen your legs, even if you are incapacitated temporarily. There is a cumulative benefit to the exercise. You will be stronger as a result and maybe you will bleed less. Particularly, if you have a target joint and that is why you are in a wheelchair in the first place.

**Having in mind that there has been a consultation with a specialist on this matter, for those in our community who are using a wheelchair or crutches on a daily basis, what could be simple examples of non-structured physical activity?**

I think if you are in a wheelchair it does get challenging and you do need access to some sort of facility, e.g. swimming pool. **Swimming pool is great.** You don't necessarily have to swim, you can just stand in the water and use water as resistant, and perform exercises. If you are standing in a pool and doing the breast-stroke movement with your hands, you are exercising the muscles in your back. Or pushing against the side of the pool, you are working the front of your body.

**If we speak of swimming - at what age is it the best to start swimming with a child?**

In Ireland we start water activity with our children at as young as 3 months. The great thing about swimming and kids is that if you take them really young, it is almost intuitive for them, they get it. If you leave it for later, they get a bit afraid and scared of