

IT'S OKAY TO PLAY



Supporting families living with
cerebral palsy to be active



Play



Participate



Enjoy

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Purpose

This resource has been developed for families and anyone who provides support to children and young people with cerebral palsy. It provides advice and guidance regarding the importance of being active, ideas on how to be active as a family and how to find local opportunities.



CP Sport

CP Sport is a national disability sports organisation and charity. We encourage people with cerebral palsy to live more active lives by promoting the opportunity, capability and motivation involved in taking part in sport and physical activities. We provide sport and activity opportunities, a range of support services and also use our voice to influence change for the benefit of disabled people.

Our vision

Everyone with cerebral palsy enjoys a lifetime habit of sport and physical activity.

Our mission

To influence the sector and wider society so that every person with cerebral palsy has the opportunity and choice to enjoy being physically active.

Our values

Listen to our community and work together to find solutions to achieve our vision.

Collaborate with others from within the sector and from outside of the sector - we can't achieve our vision on our own.

Learn from our successes, our mistakes and from others, enabling CP Sport to be an agile, dynamic and innovative organisation.

Support people with cerebral palsy to lead an independent and active life.

Bring enjoyment and fun to our work, to our programmes, our events and ultimately to our community.

Advocate for and refer to "The Social Model of Disability" in our work to raise the level of equality within the sport and leisure sector; also to remove systemic barriers and social exclusion for people with cerebral palsy.

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Cerebral palsy and associated physical impairments

Cerebral palsy is an umbrella term for a number of neurological conditions that affect the development of movement, coordination and posture, causing activity limitation. (Rethlefsen. S.A et al (2010) Classification Systems in cerebral palsy).

There is often the misconception that cerebral palsy is a singular condition, however any condition that is as a result of damage to the brain, at any stage of life, can come under the umbrella of cerebral palsy including;

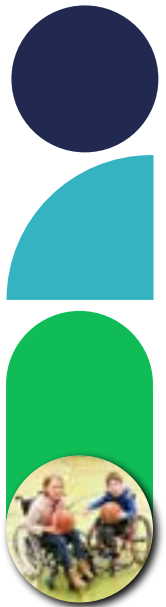
- Traumatic brain injury
- Stroke
- Dystonia



Cerebral palsy is not progressive; the injury to the brain does not change. However, the effects may change over time for better or worse. This is where being active can have a really positive impact.

Cerebral palsy cannot be cured, however physiotherapy, medication, and when appropriate, surgery can often help people with cerebral palsy become more independent.

It is important to remember that no two people will be affected by their cerebral palsy in the same way.



Describing cerebral palsy (cp)

Where the neurological damage has occurred will affect the type of cp a person will present with. The image below describes the three main types of cp and the resulting movement.



SPASTIC: 80-90%.

Most common. Muscles appear stiff and tight. Arises from motor cortex damage.

DYSKINETIC: 6%.

Involuntary movements such as dystonia, athetosis and/or chorea. Arises from damage to the basal ganglia.

ATAXIC: 5%.

Shaky movements. Affects balance and sense of positioning in space. Arises from cerebellum damage.

MIXED TYPES:

A number of children with cp will have two motor types present e.g. spasticity and dystonia.

These are the 3 most common diagnoses:



SPASTIC QUADRIPLEGIA / BILATERAL

Both arms and legs are affected. The muscles of the trunk, face and mouth are often also affected.



SPASTIC DIPLEGIA/BILATERAL

Both legs are affected. The arms may be affected to a lesser extent.



SPASTIC HEMIPLEGIA/UNILATERAL

One side of the body (one arm and one leg) is affected.

Please note that you can also get monoplegia - one area / limb affected, and triplegia - three areas affected.

Credit: Cerebral Palsy Alliance.



Importance of being active

94% of children and young people who took part in sport and activity delivered by CP Sport in 2019 felt happier as a result, with 85% feeling more confident.

The benefits of taking part in sport and physical activity are well documented. For people with a physical impairment it has many benefits; physically, emotionally and socially.

Physical benefits	Emotional benefits	Social benefits
Better posture	Increased confidence	Sense of belonging
Increased strength	Increased wellbeing	Friendship groups
Increased movement	Positive thoughts	Development of life skills
Able to be active for longer periods	Improved self-esteem	Positive impact on communities
Helps in physiotherapy	Improved self-perception	Breaking down barriers / stigmas
Increased ability	Tactical thinking	Positive impact on family life





Being active from a young age will help to develop movement skills, support the ability to do everyday activities and reach fundamental milestones.

Including:

- **Moving head in response to sound and light**
- **Holding small objects such as balls, pens and pencils**
- **Moving freely and confidently**

The positive impact of sport and activity is often not just experienced by the individual, it could inspire their families and friends to be active together, have fun and share new experiences.





Being active as a family

There are many things that families can do together to be active. This doesn't always have to be structured sport and activity sessions.

Play is hugely important and can be done at home, on holiday, or whilst visiting family members. It does not require lots of room and specialist equipment, it is about developing skills and ability in a fun informal way.

PLAY

- Take on an adventure - be creative, use stories and characters to inspire movements.
- Change the equipment you use (bigger, softer, harder) - use a beach ball instead of a tennis ball, or bubbles instead of beanbags.
- Use sensory equipment such as lights and different textures - use what you have such as disco lights, tin foil, cardboard boxes.
- Play on the floor - explore movements and equipment.
- Use music to inspire movement.

If you are unsure of what to do then seek advice from professionals. Speak to Occupational Therapists, Physiotherapists or local play workers.





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Specialist equipment

You may already be involved in a sport or activity that requires specialist equipment such as a trike or a Frame Runner.

These can also be used to be active as a family. They can be used for a family walk, or a run in the local park.

Support equipment

There are a number of support aids that individuals may have to use when taking part in sport and physical activity. Again these might change based on activities, confidence levels, and ability.



CP Sport rental service

It is possible to hire frames for Frame Football and Frame Running from CP Sport and our partner organisation Quest, to use at home with our support. You can do this through **cpsport.org**





Power Wheelchair

high performance power chairs designed for challenging environments and everyday usage.



Sports Chair

usually quick and highly manoeuvrable with angled wheels for stability during tight turns.



Walking Frame

for those who normally use walkers for mobility or gait training, for example the frames help with kicking and ball control.



Frame Runner

a three wheeled frame where the athlete is supported by a saddle and body plate.



Crutches

can be used for taking part in sport. Spring loaded crutches can help reduce stress on wrists, elbows and shoulders.



Disability sport

At CP Sport we believe in the importance of people being able to try activities that are fun and adapted to meet individual needs. We support programmes that will allow people to be active on a regular basis, within their local community.

There is often the misconception that people have to be classified to take part in disability sport. This is not true! Classification is only needed when someone wants to compete in sport.

National Governing Bodies of Sport (NGBs) offer adapted, disability (para) versions of their sport. Below is a list of examples of sports that people with a disability can take part in.



Athletics



Swimming



Football



Golf



Gymnastics



Rowing



Boccia



Curling



Taekwondo



Snooker



Surfing



Badminton



Tennis



Rugby



Shooting



Snow sports



Archery



Bowls



Climbing



Horse-riding



Volleyball



Power lifting



Movement
& dance



Netball



Cycling



Running



Angling



Basketball



Canoeing



Triathlon



Fencing



Goalball



Frame
football



Frame
running



Table
tennis



Wrestling

It is important to remember that just because there is an adapted version, it does not mean that you have to take part in this. Being active is about choice, and participating in the way each person feels comfortable. For example, tennis clubs may offer wheelchair tennis, however just because you have a physical impairment does not mean you have to use a wheelchair. The same with sitting volleyball - if you can and want to play standing you should be able to do so.

When looking to attend a sport or activity session it is vital as a parent / carer that you feel confident the experience is going to be a positive one for you and your family member.

There are a number of steps that can help:

- ▶ Contact the organisation, centre or coach prior to the session to ask any questions you have. This also provides them with a chance to ask any questions they may have.
- ▶ Take any information you may have from physiotherapists / occupational therapists and provide this to the coaches / leaders at the session. This will support your child's development.
- ▶ Encourage your child to try different and new things such as different equipment or tasks.
- ▶ Be there as a support but step back from being directly involved in the session unless absolutely necessary, coaches will ask for your support when and if needed.



Facts and figures

We often hear from children and young people who have cerebral palsy that they feel like they are the only one. Your child may go to a mainstream school where they are the only pupil who has a physical disability, who uses a frame, crutches, or a wheelchair.

We want families and individuals to realise that even though it may seem it, you are not alone.



It is estimated that there are 30,000 children and young people with cerebral palsy in the UK.

1 in 400 babies are born with cerebral palsy (Adult CP Hub).



36% of the disabled population have a mobility issue with the majority of this being cerebral palsy. (Sport England Mapping Disability 2017)





Finding sport and activity

CP Sport events include virtual and live events such as athletics and swimming national championships, football and taster days. You can also find your nearest sports club through the CP Sport Club Finder using a postcode search. Using the Club Finder you will be able to take part in activities with the confidence that they are suitable for people with cerebral palsy. Find out more on the CP Sport website.

If you are interested in a specific sport take a look at the CP Sport website sport pages or contact the National Governing Body (NGB) of that sport.

Active Partnerships will hold information regarding clubs across the county, as well as any wider groups and organisations offering disability or inclusive activities.

Check your local authority website too for support and community services.



Further information

For further advice and guidance please either contact CP Sport via email **info@cpsport.org**, visit the CP Sport website by scanning in the QR code below or go to **cpsport.org**

There are a number of other organisations who can provide resources and support.

The below organisations have useful information regarding disability sport sessions.

activityalliance.org.uk
ukcoaching.org/resources
youthsporttrust.org
sportengland.org/our-work/disability/
limbpower.com
wheelpower.org.uk
dsauk.org
britishblindsport.org.uk
ukdeafsport.org.uk
mencap.org.uk
specialolympics.org.uk
activepartnerships.org

**General enquiries
please contact:**

info@cpsport.org

Charity number: 1088600



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Linkedin: Cerebral Palsy Sport

Instagram: @CP_Sport18

CP SPORT
cerebral palsy sport

 **COMMUNITY
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