

Quality of Life

- **Quality of life relates to your ability to do daily tasks, participate in the community and enjoy activities**
- **It is often better to stay active and find things you can enjoy despite your limitations**
- **You can often change the way you do things, or use equipment or services to help you**
- **It's often better to focus on what you can do, and not what you can't do**

Quality of life has been **defined** as “the degree to which an individual is healthy, comfortable, and able to participate in or enjoy life events.” In **one study**, a group of polio survivors said that quality of life is affected by accessible environments, social belonging and acceptance. **Another group** said that being able to do your daily activities is important for quality of life. Someone may have a higher quality of life if their disability doesn't stop them from doing things that they want to do. They may be able to find new ways to complete tasks, or new activities to enjoy.

Making Changes To Help With Quality Of Life

If there are some things you can't do because of polio or the Late Effects of Polio, this can affect your quality of life. Many people find it helpful to focus on what they can do, instead of what they can't. There may also be things you

can change, or new things you could try. For example, if you are unable to do some daily tasks, a health professional such as an Occupational Therapist (OT) can help with equipment or strategies to make the task easier. Or it might be better to have someone help you to complete tasks, giving you more time and energy to do things you enjoy.

Many working polio survivors experience fatigue, pain and increasing weakness because of the Late Effects of Polio. This can make it hard to keep working. While this might affect some people's quality of life, others find they are able to make positive changes. This might include changing the work set-up, moving to part-time hours so they can continue working, or enjoying volunteer work at their own pace.



Some other examples could be:

- Someone is unable to shower and dress by themselves. An OT makes changes to the way the bathroom is set up, and now the person can do this task without help. This helps them feel more independent and in control.
- Someone has to stop going for walks in the park, because it takes so much time and energy to do the housework. They decide to get a cleaner, go back to the park, and now have more energy and more enjoyment.
- Another person has stopped meeting with friends for dinner because it's hard to get to a lot of places and they get tired. They find an accessible place to meet, and spend a short time with friends over coffee instead of a full meal. This helps them feel more socially connected.



- A person who has always enjoyed painting finds that they get fatigued quickly when standing at an easel. They change to doing seated and desk-based painting and drawing.
- Someone who used to like fishing finds it hard to get on and off the boat. They now find enjoyment in pier fishing with friends.
- Someone who used to like going to sports matches has stopped going because it's too tiring to walk the long distances and climb the steps. With help from their GP and OT, they now have a [disability parking permit](#) and a wheelchair. They start going back to regular games.

Things You Can Do

- See an [Occupational Therapist](#) for help with daily tasks
- See a [Physiotherapist](#) for help with walking and getting around
- Change what you do so that you don't overdo it—less is more!
- Focus on what you can do and not what you can't do
- Talk to your [general practitioner](#) or a [psychologist](#) if you are finding it difficult to enjoy activities or you feel your quality of life is affected by your disability

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