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# Recreational Therapy-Spinal Cord Injury Manual

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Regional Spinal Cord Injury Center of the Delaware Valley  
NIDRR-designated

# *Spinal Cord Injury Manual*

A publication of the  
Regional Spinal Cord Injury Center  
of the Delaware Valley

The Regional Spinal Cord Injury Center of the Delaware Valley provides a comprehensive program of patient care, community education, and research. It is a federally designated program of Thomas Jefferson University and its affiliated institutions of Thomas Jefferson University Hospital and Magee Rehabilitation Hospital.



# Spinal Cord Injury Patient-Family Teaching Manual

**A Publication of the  
Regional Spinal Cord Injury Center  
of the Delaware Valley**

Researched and prepared by the clinical  
personnel of Thomas Jefferson University  
Hospital and Magee Rehabilitation Hospital

Available online at:

[www.spinalcordcenter.org](http://www.spinalcordcenter.org)

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## Dedication

The Handbook Committee of the RSCICDV gratefully acknowledges the assistance and dedication of all who contributed to this manual, and all the others who worked so hard to make this Handbook a reality.

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# Recreational Therapy

## Introduction

Your free time and the way you use that time can be a source of pleasure, enjoyment and self-fulfillment for you. You will probably have many questions about your injury's effect on your ability to participate in your favorite activities and sports. Recreational therapy is available to assist you in answering your many questions and concerns and helping you plan a satisfactory leisure lifestyle for yourself.

## What Is Recreational Therapy?

Recreational therapy is a form of treatment that uses recreational activities to work on your rehabilitation goals. Through using your existing recreational skills and interests, recreational therapy can address many of your goals, including:

- **Improve Physical Abilities** – Improving muscle strength, balance, coordination, flexibility, mobility and range of motion.
- **Promote Greater Self-Reliance** – Awareness toward independent living and self-determination.
- **Enrich the Quality of Life** – Opportunities for creativity, self-expression and a productive sense of the self by using leisure time well.
- **Manage Stress** – Activities that relax both mind and body from tension and pressures.
- **Community Re-Integration** – Activities that nurture social relationships and encourage leisure activity in your community. As well as, practicing any mobility skills in a community setting.

Recreational therapy can be grouped into three types of service: treatment, leisure education and diversional activities.

## Why Is Recreational Therapy Important?

**Get Well** – Recreational therapy contributes to a healthier mind and body.

**Live Well** – Being as active as possible makes life more satisfying and fun.

**Stay Well** – Once you feel well, recreational activities can help maintain that sense of wellness.

## **Recreational Therapy Treatment As an Inpatient**

The Recreational Therapy Program provides individual and group treatment for Thomas Jefferson University Hospital and Magee Rehabilitation Hospital inpatients. Each patient who is referred for recreational therapy is evaluated by a certified therapeutic recreation specialist (CTRS), who provides an individualized program for the person depending on his or her leisure needs.

At Magee, there are patient lounges with television, DVD and VHS access. As well as, access to SCI literature. There is an area for billiards, table tennis and fooseball located on the rooftop. There is an accessible greenhouse located on the rooftop that is staffed with a full-time horticultural therapist. There are evening and weekend diversional programs with major holiday events throughout the year.

Part of recreational therapy is being re-integrated back into the community. Leisure education classes address the issues and concerns that you may have in resuming your previous leisure lifestyle. Leisure education sessions review the benefits of recreation, the barriers to participation, strategies on overcoming barriers to participation, information on adapting activities to your disability, instruction on adapted activities, review of adapted equipment and referral to appropriate community resources.

As part of your leisure education program, Magee may offer therapeutic outings to various places to learn about wheelchair accessibility, social adjustment, community mobility and specialized community resources. Patients' families are invited to attend these sessions for family training in a community setting. The places for outings may include, but are not limited to, shopping malls, sporting events, museums, restaurants, theatres, etc. We have various pieces of adapted equipment for all levels of recreation, including fishing, adaptive hand bikes, adaptive gardening tools, a voice-recognition program for using a computer, cuffs for shooting billiards and playing ping-pong and an accessible weight-lifting machine. Magee can access larger equipment such as sports chairs and sit-skis through local vendors.

When a sport or activity is not feasible to trial while at Jefferson or Magee, we make referrals to the other community resources that offer specialized recreation services or equipment. Our extensive Recreation Resource Guide lists all of the specialized community recreation programs in our area.



## Returning Home – Resuming Your Leisure Lifestyle

After your injury, you may wonder how you could possibly perform some of these activities with your present abilities. Since you may have more free time than before your injury, it is important that you find a satisfactory leisure lifestyle for yourself. Some recreation activities will need special equipment, adaptations or instructions. You will learn that you can return to many of the recreational activities that you enjoy with the proper training and equipment. You may need to use different equipment or play differently, but the objective is still the same — to have fun. People with all levels of spinal cord injury are swimming, skiing, traveling, dining out, fishing, playing tennis, golfing and enjoying every activity that you can imagine. Get out there and try it! But first, you may need some additional information and resources.

## Specialized Recreational Community Programs And Resources

Although you may continue to enjoy much of your free time with your family and friends, you may want to be involved in specialized groups for people with disabilities.

These groups are often helpful when you have many questions or concerns about a certain activity. These specialized recreation groups can be used as stepping stones to learn the necessary skills to resume your favorite activities with family and friends. These groups can offer peer support, sharing of knowledge and resources, adapted equipment loans, physical aides or assistants and instruction. There are groups that instruct competitive and recreational sports, music, art and outdoor activities. Also, there are groups that specialize in accessible travel, peer support, entertainment and socialization.

These specialized groups and services are listed in Magee's Recreation Resource Guide, which is enclosed in this handbook. This guide is updated annually. For updated copies of this guide, please contact Magee's community programs at 215-597-3412 or e-mail Pat Thieringer at [pthieringer@mageerehab.com](mailto:pthieringer@mageerehab.com).

A list of national sports associations is attached, compliments of *Sports 'n' Spokes* magazine. For an updated copy of this list, please contact *Sports 'n' Spokes*.

## The SCI Center's Community Services

### SCI Resource and Support Group

You are invited to join this group that provides opportunities for education, recreation and support for individuals with spinal cord injuries and their loved ones. This group is organized and led by individuals with spinal cord injuries. Each month, members present an educational program that has included topics such as assistive technology, research for the cure, relationships, sexuality, travel, etc.

If you would like more information or would like to be added to the mailing list for this group, please call the Peer Coordinators at 215-587-3174.

### SCI Peer Consultants

The SCI Peer Consultant Program offers newly spinal cord injured individuals the opportunity to benefit from the knowledge and experience of those who have “been there and done that.” You can become involved in several ways:

- **Proteges** – If you are in the process of adjusting to your spinal cord injury, it may be helpful for you to speak to someone who has “been there, done that.” Anyone can call and request a peer consultation. More than eighty trained peer counselors are available for your questions and concerns. Peers can be matched according to injury level, social situations, gender, marital status, recreational interests and vocational experience.
- **Mentors** – For those of you who have a weathered a spinal cord injury, you may consider volunteering as a peer consultant to help others through the difficult adjustment process. To qualify as a peer mentor, you must attend two training sessions.

To find out more about the SCI Peer Consultant Program, please contact the Peer Coordinators at 215-587-3174.

### Family Caregivers Support Group

Family Caregivers Support Group is open to all families and loved ones of people with disabilities. Spouses, parents, children and loved ones of those with disabilities can share their questions and concerns. This group is led by the SCI Peers family members.

## Wheelchair Sports

After discharge, you may find that getting involved in Magee's wheelchair sports programs helps you reach your personal health and well goals. In addition to enjoying the excitement of competing, those goals include:

- Improved fitness and overall health through physical activity.
- Increased self-esteem and confidence through the mastery of a new sport.
- Development of adapted leisure skills.
- Adjustment to disability through interaction with others with spinal cord injuries.

Magee presently provides regular practice and competition for the following sports: basketball, quad rugby, tennis, softball and power soccer. Each of these sports has regularly weekly practices with knowledgeable coaching and support staff. The team provides the wheelchair athletes financial sponsorship for most of the competition, travel and equipment expenses.

Each team has a competitive schedule of games and tournaments, and many athletes travel considerably with us to competitions throughout the country. Opportunities exist to play recreationally or compete at an elite level, progressing from local and regional competition onto nationally and international competition.

## Recreation Publications

New programs and recreational equipment are constantly being developed for people with spinal cord injury. To keep abreast of new developments, you can subscribe to one of the following publications, which cover recreational interests for people with disabilities:

### ***Sports 'n' Spokes***

PVA Publications  
2111 E. highland Avenue  
Suite 180  
Phoenix AZ 85016-4702  
1-888-888-2201  
pvapub@aol.com

### ***New Mobility***

No Limits  
Communications, Inc  
PO Box 220  
Horsham, PA 19044  
215-675-9133

***Active Living***

132 Main Street East  
Suite 1  
Grimsby, ON L3M1P1  
1-905-309-1639  
activeliv@aol.com

***Accent on Living***

PO Box 700  
Bloomington, IL 61702  
1-800-787-8444

***Access to Travel***

Publishing Office  
PO Box 352  
Hawley Lane  
New Baltimore, NY 12124  
518-731-9701

***Palestra***

Challenge Publications, Ltd.  
PO Box 508  
1948 Riverview Drive  
Macomb, IL 61455  
309-833-1902

***Paraplegia News***

2111 East Highland Avenue  
Suite 180  
Phoenix, AZ 85016-4702  
602-224-0500

***Careers & the Disabled***

Equal Opportunity  
Publications, Inc  
1160 East Jericho Turnpike  
Suite 200  
Huntington, NY 11743  
516-421-9421

# Glossary

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<b>Community Reintegration</b>	A program to facilitate your transition and return to home, work, school, neighborhood, etc. to enable your active involvement and participation in the community.
<b>Peer Mentors</b>	A person with spinal cord injury who has been trained in peer counseling skills.
<b>Quality of Life</b>	An important consideration in medical care, quality of life refers to the patient's ability to enjoy normal life activities.
<b>Recreational Therapy</b>	A program designed to help persons with disabilities answer questions and concerns regarding how their disability affects their participation in sports and other activities. You are evaluated by a certified recreational specialist who provides an individualized program to meet your leisure needs.

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# References

1. Regional Spinal Cord Injury Center brochure published December 2005.
2. Magee Rehabilitation Hospital, *Recreational Resource Guide*, published 2000.

# Comments and Feedback

The staff of the center has recently spent a lot of time and effort in revising this manual. However, we realize that those who are actively reading and using the manual can improve it. As a part of our program of continuous quality improvement, we ask you to help guide our efforts to improve the manual.

In the next section of the chapter are two forms. The first form is an overview by chapter that seeks to identify those areas of the manual that could benefit the most from additional work. We also seek to identify any major areas of concern that have not been addressed.

The second section is a more focused questionnaire that has as its goal the specific items that should be targeted. For example, should an item be added to the glossary or the definition changed. Should a drug be added to the discussion of bowel programs?

The more specific the comments are the more likely that we will be able to make the improvements that form the basis of your idea. By communicating with the Regional Spinal Cord Injury Center of the Delaware Valley, however, users grant us permission to use any information, suggestions, ideas, drawings or concerns communicated for any purpose we choose, commercial, public or otherwise, without compensation or acknowledgement whatsoever.

Thank you for taking the time to assist us in improving this manual.

Sincerely,

SCI Manual Committee

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# Feedback Form

Rate each chapter by placing an “X” on the scale underneath the term that best captures your opinion. Using the next page, provide specific comments regarding your ratings. Feel free to make copies of the next page.

	No Opinion	Fair	Satisfactory	Good	Excellent
<b>Credits / Front Matter</b>					
<b>Table of Contents</b>					
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<b>Cardiovascular</b>					
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<b>Recreational Therapy / Resource Guide</b>					
<b>Travel and Transportation</b>					
<b>Sexuality</b>					
<b>Spinal Cord Injury Follow-Up Care System</b>					
<b>Master Glossary</b>					



# Suggestions and Comments

Chapter: \_\_\_\_\_

Page(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Any terms that need to be added to the glossary? How would you define the terms?

Any section or paragraph that was not clear?

Any drawing or sketch that would help to illustrate the material being covered?

Any additional topic that should be covered?

Any questions you have that you feel should have been answered by the manual?

What is the question?

What is the suggested answer?

Any references that should be added? Any other resources that should be mentioned?

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