

Spinal Outreach Team Newsletter

Issue 22, January 2019

Welcome to 2019 and we wish you all a Happy New Year.

This year's newsletter is about **living well**. Living well can mean different things to different people but it generally includes looking after our health and doing things we enjoy.

In this edition, people with spinal cord injury have shared with us some of the things they enjoy.



Luke enjoys the beach and being involved in paddle boarding. He is keen to spread the word and encourage others to have a go. Have a look at the [Blue Journey Australia](#) website or [Blue Journey Unified](#) Facebook page to see more about prone paddle boarding.



Chances are, like most of us, you may have made a New Year's resolution or two that involved staying fit and healthy. According to internet searches, it is a very popular one!

We also know New Year's resolutions are hard to stick to and one reason for this could be that they are often too broad and hard to achieve.

A key to success, with any goal setting, is to break things down and keep it simple. In this issue of the SPOT newsletter we look at some of the things that can contribute to living well, and offer some simple tips and resources to help you if you are thinking about making some changes.

Change can be hard, and many people with spinal cord injury (SCI) face extra barriers when thinking about lifestyle changes. Try not to be too hard on yourself, and remember that even small changes can make a difference. The important thing is to make a start. And take some time to enjoy the successes along the way, no matter how small they may seem!

We care about you



**Queensland
Government**

Eat well

Eating well gives you more energy to do the things you want to do in life and keeps you in good health. As we age, we all face an increased risk of conditions such as heart disease and diabetes, but this risk is actually a bit higher for people with SCI. All of us have room to make improvements to our eating habits but it can be tough to make changes that will stick. The good news is that even small changes, made one or two at a time, add up to make a huge difference.

Getting started: Which of these changes could you make today to improve your health?

- Start the day well. Eat a nutritious breakfast such as eggs on multi-grain bread or a high fibre breakfast cereal with fruit, milk or yoghurt.
- Try to include at least three different coloured vegetables or salad ingredients on your plate at lunch and dinner.
- Take soft drinks, cordials and fruit juices out of your fridge and cupboard and replace them with water, herbal tea or mineral water.



If you'd like more support, talk to your GP about how they can help. You can request a referral from your doctor to see an [Accredited Practicing Dietitian \(APD\)](#) who can educate and guide you to make positive dietary changes. Check out the back page for some more resources about maintaining health after SCI.

Sleep well

Sleeping well helps us to feel more energetic and alert and can reduce the risk of health problems. Most adults need 7-9 hours sleep daily. If you are finding it hard to get a good night's sleep, there are lots of things you can try. Here are a few:

- Work with your body clock to develop a routine.
- Avoid caffeine near bedtime.
- Create the right space - a quiet, dark, comfortable bedroom.
- Develop a sleep ritual to remind your body it's time to sleep.

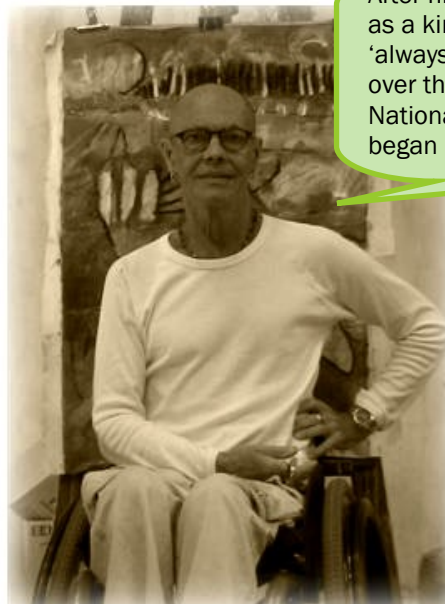
There are lots of resources online. Try searching for these government publications:

- [Importance of sleep for healthy lifestyle](#)
- ["Sleep Hygiene" Centre for clinical interventions](#)
- [Better Health Channel sleep hygiene](#)

Frank enjoys working with timber. He gives new life to old Singer sewing machine stands, making tops from silky oak, red cedar or other timbers to create writing desks and phone tables.



After his injury, Geoffrey 'turned to art, initially as a kind of occupational therapy', but he had 'always had a love of painting and kept at it over the years'. Geoffrey 'got a place in the National Art School in Darlinghurst and so began his career'.



Do something you enjoy. It's good for you!

- Set aside time for a fun activity.
- Try to find a way to reconnect with something you have enjoyed in the past.
- Be adventurous and try something new.

Stay active

Everyone can benefit from physical activity. Staying active is good for your body and your mind. It can also provide social opportunities to meet old friends or make new ones.

Not everyone enjoys exercise or finds it easy to make time for it but there are many ways to be active that can be incorporated into your day:

- Try to do something active at home like gardening, housework or playing with the kids.
- Turn off the screens and get outside.
- Combine activity with a social occasion. Meet a friend at the park or shops or join an organised activity where you can meet new people.

It's okay to start slowly. Changing habits takes time. Even a small increase of ten minutes a day can lead to benefits you will notice. Consider talking to your GP about how you can be supported to increase your activity. You can request a referral to a physiotherapist or exercise physiologist for guidance on physical activities appropriate for your abilities. Adaptations like modified gloves can make it easier to hold things like weights or fishing rods. Using assistive technology for daily chores and self cares can save energy for things you want to do.

Steve found a new way to be involved in fishing.

Stay mentally active

Here are some ideas to think about:

- **Keep your brain active**

Challenge yourself. Learn something new, read widely, try puzzles and quizzes.

- **Connect with other people**

Spend time with family and friends or think about joining a club or group activity to meet new people. Stay connected through social media. Become a volunteer.

- **Relax**

Make time to do what helps you unwind. Maybe it's music, TV, meditation or experiencing nature.

- **Ask for help when you need it**

There are groups and services in the community that might just have the support you have been looking for. If you are not sure what is out there contact SPOT for advice.



Russell reflected that 'life goes on after a spinal injury. I enjoy being involved in the adapted community garden at the Spinal Injuries Unit'.

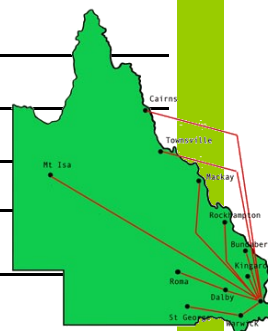


Have a look at the [Queensland Spinal Cord Injuries Service](#) website for information and fact sheets.

Regional visits 2019

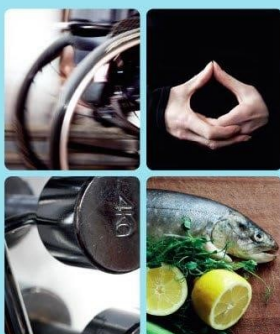
Check out this year's schedule so you know when we will be in your area.

Area	Week Of
Toowoomba, Pittsworth and surrounding areas	28 th January 2019
Roma, Dalby and west	18 th February 2019
Mackay, south to Sarina and north to Bowen	11 th March 2019
Rockhampton and west, Emerald & Dysart	25 th March 2019
Cairns and Hinterland, north to Cooktown and the Cape	29 th April 2019
Bundaberg and Monto	27 th May 2019
Nambour and north of Nambour to Gympie	17 th June 2019
Longreach, Winton and surrounding region	15 th July 2019
Stanthorpe, Warwick and west	29 th July 2019
Kingaroy, Murgon, Gayndah and Mundubbera	26 th August 2019
Townsville and Mt Isa (including Palm Island)	16 th September 2019
Cairns and Hinterland, south to Tully	14 th October 2019
Gladstone, Biloela, Theodore and Bundaberg	28 th October 2019
Hervey Bay and Maryborough	25 th November 2019



The art of healthy living with physical impairments

Your comprehensive lifestyle guide to health and wellness



Anna-Carin Lagerström & Kerstin Wahman

"The art of healthy living with physical impairments"

Some team members from SPOT attended the International Spinal Cord Society (ISCoS) conference in Sydney in 2018 and picked up a copy of this book, written by Swedish authors Anna-Carin Lagerström and Kerstin Wahman, who are physiotherapists and health coaches.

The book is a guide to living a healthier lifestyle and includes information and tools about motivation and lifestyle change, food and weight, physical activity and exercise, and mindfulness and thought training.

It has been written for people who live with a physical impairment but may also be a useful resource for family, friends, support workers and health professionals. Some of the content is specifically related to spinal cord injury.

The book is available **free of charge** as a downloadable pdf file on the 'books' section of the [Spinalis Foundation](http://www.spinalisfoundation.org.au) website. Take a look at another free publication on this site, ["Food, weight and health for people with spinal cord injury"](http://www.spinalisfoundation.org.au), for some healthy eating tips.

Spinal Outreach Team Contact Details

Phone: 3406 2300 or 1800 624 832 (for regional clients)

Fax: 3406 2399

Postal: PO Box 6053, Buranda Q 4102

Email: spot@health.qld.gov.au

Web: www.health.qld.gov.au/qscis

Location: 3rd Floor, Buranda Village, Cnr Cornwall St & Ipswich Rd, Buranda Q 4102