

Getting Out of the Chair

During one of my early trips for rehab therapy I learned how to sit upright without my chair. Through controlled breathing and the use of muscles in my torso that I haven't used since my accident I could sit on my own.

When I got home I continued with this exercise and recovered some trunk control that allows me more movement and control while in my wheelchair. In addition, it gave me the confidence to get out my chair and enjoy a new freedom.



I was invited to go sailing with a family friend. With my lift sling from home, a borrowed seat frame and some rope and pulleys we were setting sail in no time.



We quickly became more proficient at getting me out of the wheelchair and my comfort zone. We used the ceiling lift from my bedroom in the garage to get in a friend's convertible. With some rope over a ceiling rafter we raised me enough to remove the wheelchair and back in the car. You can see the lift above my head.



Getting into the water was much easier, I was lifted from my chair to a back board and then to the water. The pool is a great place to relax and an even better place to exercise. The water allows you to work muscles your chair supports. If you have access to a pool, spend as much time in the water as possible.

With a couple of friends or family members, a little ingenuity and some determination you can trade in your wheelchair for a completely different mode of transportation. The bi-plane ride was incredible. We used the lift again to hold me in the air to a point that we could roll the plane under me. It gave me confidence to know that with my level of injury I could still get out of my chair and see the world from a different view.



There are groups around the country that specialize in activities for people with spinal cord injuries check with your therapists. They may have contacts with organizations providing sky diving, river rafting, underwater diving, snow or water skiing, surfing, hunting or horseback riding. You could potentially check a few things off your bucket list.



I keep reminding myself that "life hasn't ended, it's just changed."

Check out www.MakeaSplashInc.com for other ideas.



Make a Splash! Inc will work with the newly injured and their families on the transition to life in a wheelchair. In addition we will introduce life with a disability to able-bodied audiences and express the importance of making good choices in their daily lives.