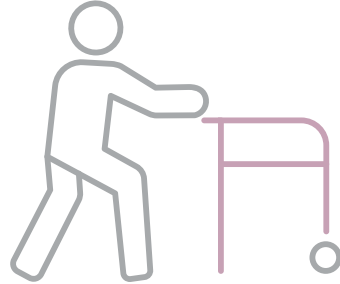
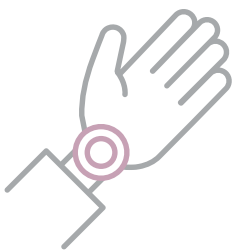




# PHYSICAL IMPAIRMENT

Physical impairments and conditions are those that affect a person's physical functioning.



## CONDITION EXAMPLES

Examples include (but are not limited to):

- Cerebral palsy
- Spina bifida
- Multiple sclerosis
- Spinal cord injury
- Muscular dystrophy
- Short stature
- Chronic arthritis
- Fibromyalgia
- Loss of limb/s.

Given the range of conditions considered under physical impairment it is not possible to outline each in detail; however, key websites are given in the 'resources' section for more information on some common physical impairments.

## POTENTIAL IMPACTS

Depending on the diagnosis a physical impairment can impact a range of things including:

- Mobility
- Balance
- Coordination/motor planning
- Motor control
- Endurance
- Muscle strength
- Muscle tone
- Reflexes
- Involuntary movements
- Dexterity
- Speech
- Swallowing
- Respiratory functioning
- Basic activities of daily living (eating, dressing, toileting showering), etc.

Even within the same diagnosis the impacts will differ from person to person.

## SUPPORT NEEDS

Some people with high physical support needs will require assistance with most, if not all, daily tasks. Others with lower support needs may be able to function quite independently with the help of adaptive equipment, alternative methods for performing tasks, and/or modifications to their environment to meet their needs.

## POSSIBLE CAUSES

Physical disability may occur due to something that happens during pregnancy or birth, may be genetic in nature, or occur following an illness or injury.

## STRENGTHS

Each individual will come with their own unique strengths however, in general, people with a physical impairment are great at problem solving and adapting ways to do things; they have a strong knowledge of their disability/condition; they are determined and have good skills around the use of any equipment they use (e.g. wheelchairs).

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## SUPPORTING THE PERSON AT NETBALL

# 1

### Get to know the person

- Utilise the 'All About Me' form to better understand the individual and the supports they may need
- Don't assume what the person can and can't do: each person is different
- Most people will have a strong understanding of what works and doesn't work for them. Find out from the person what assistance, if any, they need
- Be aware that the person may have differences with sensory perception as well such as altered touch and temperature perception (may not feel that they are sitting on a hot chair surface, may not immediately notice an injury)
- Some people with physical impairments impacting speech may also use communication aids, please get to know the person's communication system and use it when communicating. Don't assume, if they have trouble with speech, that they don't understand you

# 2

### Ensure accessibility and safety

- Please refer to the 'Accessible Environments' resource for tips to create an accessible environment
- Provide appropriate space to move and seating where needed
- Identify any slip or trip hazards in the space and minimise these as much as possible. If not possible, make sure the participants are aware of any hazards
- Have a safe place for storage of any mobility equipment and access to charging facilities
- Keep areas, particularly walkways, pathways and doorways free of clutter and try not to move things such as furniture around wherever possible
- Use the most accessible pathways to go between activities
- Be respectful of any equipment the person uses. For mobility aids (including wheelchairs), it's important these are respected as an extension of the person's body. Don't lean on a wheelchair when talking with the person and always ask permission before touching it or offering to push it. Ask the person if they need help first

# 3

### Allow time

- Factor in rest breaks or shorter sessions if fatigue is an issue, consider what time of day sessions are (i.e. does the person have more energy in the late morning, avoid hot parts of the day if possible)
- Allow extra time to physically complete tasks (drills & session activities; going to the toilet, getting a drink etc.); some individuals will have catheters or colostomy bags that may require regular emptying

# 4

### Adapt session activities

- Adapt the skills/tasks as needed, increasing or decreasing level of difficulty as needed: e.g. throwing distance to target; level of accuracy required; number of repetitions of drill; size of playing area; completing tasks collaboratively versus individually; increasing/decreasing balance, motor planning, endurance and strength requirements of activities
- Adapt so each person can experience success but also continue to challenge with new and more difficult skills. Make sure people feel able to try new things and that it's okay to make mistakes. Provide praise/reinforcement for successes and when the person has tried their best
- Break down skills and activities into steps/components to learn one at a time before putting them all together, allow for ongoing practice of movement tasks from session to session
- You may need to review and practice skills from previous sessions multiple times before moving on to new skills
- Consider the use of adaptive equipment as needed (e.g. easy grip balls, lowered hoop heights, flat markers etc.) – see adaptive equipment resource

Continues on the next page →



## THINGS TO REMEMBER

Each person is an individual and will have different strengths, interests and support needs even when they have the same disability or condition.

### Remember to:

- Utilise the 'All About Me' form and have a conversation with the person
- Create a culture where the person will feel comfortable asking for assistance if they need it
- Don't worry if you make a mistake, it's all a part of learning
- Small changes will make a big difference

## INTERESTED IN LEARNING MORE?

### Physical Disability Australia



[Physical Disability Australia website](#) →

### Assistive technology and equipment overview



[Little Athletics website](#) →

### Arthritis



[Arthritis Australia website](#) →

### Cerebral Palsy



[Little Athletics website](#) →

### Cerebral Palsy



[Cerebral Palsy Alliance website](#) →

### Limb difference and Amputation



[Little Athletics website](#) →

### Motor Neurone Disease



[MND Australia website](#) →

### Multiple Sclerosis



[MS Australia website](#) →

### Muscular Dystrophy



[Muscular Dystrophy Australia website](#) →

### Parkinson's disease



[Parkinson's Australia website](#) →

### Short Stature



[Little Athletics website](#) →

### Spina Bifida



[Children's Health Queensland website](#) →

### Spinal Cord Injury



[Spinal Cord Injuries Australia website](#) →

Information in this resource card has been adapted from:

- <https://disability-resource.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/1.-Physical-Disabilities.pdf>