

Organising the day

Living with a stroke means that all the activities of daily life take longer, and have to be fitted in around a schedule of therapy, medical check-ups, extra phone calls and visitors – there can be little room for flexibility.

Making a timetable

To help avoid panics, bottlenecks or being late for appointments, write out a timetable for the main items in each week, set out on a day-to-day basis. These might include:

- Meals
- Shower/dressing
- Therapy appointments
- Socialising
- Stroke club
- Practising exercises
- Visits to doctor/dentist/lawyer/bank
- Working toward goals
- Rest times
- Times to take medicine
- Favourite TV programmes or other interests
- Getting ready for bed.

The timetable could also incorporate the help roster ([see page 153](#)) and include the times helpers are going to arrive. Keep the timetable where it can be easily seen, eg, on the fridge.

Allow plenty of time

Allow more time than you think you'll need for each item – it is important to avoid the person with stroke being hurried. Try to keep to the timetable, but on a trial-and-error basis at first, with the schedule adjusted in the light of experience.

Avoid pressure

If possible, arrange for more demanding tasks to be alternated with more relaxing activities. The timetable will enable you to see at a glance that, for example, Thursday is impossibly packed with events and one of the appointments should be shifted back to Tuesday; or Friday looks relatively free and would be a good day to have someone over for lunch.

Keep to the schedule

Keep the schedule going, fine-tuning the timing until experience shows the timetable is working well. Among the many benefits:

- The person with stroke will feel more secure about being able to manage their daily life
- Helpers can quickly familiarise themselves with the household routine
- Poor motivation can be jogged along by a definite plan
- 'Free' time can be enjoyed without the worry that you should be doing something else.

TV can be a trap. It's too easy to get anchored there.

Working toward goals

Planning the day should take into account the rehabilitation goals (see page 136), with time set aside for practice of specific skills necessary to achieve these goals. Many of the day's ordinary activities can be structured to help progress towards goals and give more sense of purpose to tasks.