

RECREATION AND LEISURE

If you had a recent injury you should always check with your GP before returning back to sport or attempting long distance travel.

This is important for all injuries ranging from broken bones, head injuries, lung injuries and abdominal surgery such as a laparotomy. The most common timeframe for abdominal surgery or an organ injury is usually 3 months but this very much depends on your injuries. It is important to discuss this with your doctor before returning to sport, be it contact or non-contact sport. You should also check with your doctor when it is safe to fly.

Engaging in sports

There are a number of organisations throughout the UK that can help people recovering from injuries get back into physical exercise, whether resuming your old sport or activity or embarking on a new sport modified for a disability. Some of these organisations are listed below.

Preparing for holidays

Enjoyable holidays help everyone's wellbeing, but travelling can present particular challenges for people after a traumatic injury.

Standard travel insurance will often not cover people with a “pre-existing medical condition or defect”, however there are specialist insurance companies that do. [Headway provides a holiday factsheet](#) which includes a list of companies that provide insurance cover for travellers with a disability, including brain injury. It is important to declare everything about your medical history, and check that your policy covers any aids or equipment you might need to take with you. Make sure you have a sufficient supply of medicines, and that they are clearly labelled. It is sometimes advisable to have a note from your GP outlining your prescribed medications.

Help with travel

It is a good idea to contact companies concerned (airline, railway, accommodation) well in advance if you have any special requirements. Don't assume that staff members will know and understand your needs, make sure you tell them! And allow enough time for boarding, you may not follow the same procedure as everyone else.

Under [EU regulations](#) passengers with a disability and people with reduced mobility are legally entitled to free special assistance when travelling by air. This may include help when travelling through an airport, boarding or disembarking an aircraft and during a flight. To

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guarantee this assistance passengers must inform their airline of the assistance they require, at least 48 hours prior to take off.

The UK Civil Aviation Authority [has a website which provides information about the special assistance services available at UK airports](#), and by the major airlines flying to and from UK airports.

There are travel companies that specialise in organising holidays for people with a disability. [Accessible Travel](#) organise vacations for people with disabilities, in wheelchair and/or who travel with carers. [Virgin Holidays](#) have a special assistance team to help people who have mobility restrictions or special medical or disability support requirements.

Useful Organisations

Sports and physical fitness

- Sitting Volleyball (England)
https://www.volleyballengland.org/getintovolleyball/sitting_volleyball_centres
- Back Up Trust (<http://www.backuptrust.org.uk/home>)
- Parasport (<http://parasport.org.uk/>)
- Inclusive Fitness Gyms (http://www.efds.co.uk/inclusive_fitness)

Travel

- Headway provides information for travellers with a disability (<https://www.headway.org.uk/about-brain-injury/individuals/factsheets/>) as well as special travel insurance (<http://www.policydirect.co.uk/hwy/hwyquote.htm>);
- Civil Aviation Authority special assistance website (<http://www.caa.co.uk/default.aspx?catid=2800&pageid=17079>)
- Accessible Travel (<http://www.accessibletravel.co.uk/>)
- Virgin Holidays Special Assistance (<http://www.virginholidays.co.uk/important/disabled-customers>)