

# Ways to Find Opportunities in Mainstream Community Life

## Introduction

Sometimes people with disability have been isolated from people around them for a long time, and it can be hard to know where to start. Or sometimes people have only been part of paid disability related activities and groups. This guide aims to help you see the possibilities that having NDIS funded supports might offer you to be part of your local community through recreation, volunteering or sporting groups.

## Let's make it happen

### *Coming up with ideas*

The first step to finding something to do in your community is to think about what you might enjoy!

- ***What did you enjoy when you were a child?*** If you enjoyed glitter glue and ice-cream sticks, maybe try a crafting group doing a more grown-up version! If you enjoyed watching Dad work on the car, maybe you could join a car enthusiasts club?
- ***Try a couple of ideas on for size.*** If you need some inspiration, maybe just hang around at a sports shop, or the stalls at your Royal Show, or browse a record shop? Getting physically out there might be just the trick.
- ***Choose something that helps you forget about your day.*** When you've had an especially tough day, what are the best things to help you wind down? Does cooking soothe you? Or listening to music, or maybe punching a boxing bag? How could these activities be focussed into a hobby or sport for you?
- ***See if you have any past hobbies that you forgot about.*** Sometimes it's easy to forget what you used to enjoy – is there a film camera lurking in your shed? Maybe now's a good time to pull it out and join a photography club?
- ***What do your friends enjoy?*** Sometimes it can be easier to start something new if you do it with a friend – you could join something they already enjoy, or be brave and try something new together – has your flatmate always wanted to try ballroom dancing or kite making? Maybe now is the time!
- ***Notice what you love to buy as guilty pleasures.*** Money can often be short, but when you've got a chance to spoil yourself, what do you like to buy? Scented candles? Maybe you could learn to make them at a Community Centre class. Or do you splurge on short story books when you can? Maybe you could take up writing and join a writers' group. Maybe you're a coffee fiend? How about a barista course?
- ***See What You Want To Change About Your Life.*** Do you feel like you're not driven by a greater good anymore? There are so many volunteer opportunities; you might just change the world for the better. Maybe some Star Wars cosplay volunteering in the 501<sup>st</sup> or Rebel Legions are right up your alley?

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[\(http://fashionablygeek.com/costumes/donning-a-costume-for-the-sake-of-charity-feature/\)](http://fashionablygeek.com/costumes/donning-a-costume-for-the-sake-of-charity-feature/)

- **Think of the Last Thing That Made you Forget to Eat.** Was it a beautiful song? Join a choir. Was it a Mythbusters TV Show marathon? Join a science club, or start making short films.

## ***Ideas for Recreation Opportunities***

\* Theatre Troop \* Model Train Club \* Book Club \* Lego Club \* Rally Driving Group \* Scouts \* Art Class \* Parkour \* Choir \* Band \* Detector Club \* Science Club \* Gaming Group \* Quilt Making \* History Club \* Robotics Group \* Guides \* Photography Group \* Beer Brewing Club \* Grey Nomad Group \* Circus Class \* Knitting Group \* Fishing Association \* Scrapbooking Group \* Public Speaking Group \* Community Garden \* Pottery Club \* Bridge Club \* 4WD Club \* Toastmasters \* Technology User Group \* Men's Shed \* Wine tasting group \* Horticultural Group \* Dog Club \* Writing or Poetry Group \* Political Group \* Cooking Club \* Model Car Racing \* Stamp Collecting Club \* Amateur Radio Club \* Karaoke \* Geocaching \* Debating \* Language Club \* Movie Goers Club \* Car Enthusiast Club \* Environmentalist Club \* Politics in the Pub Group \* Art Club \* Drumming Group \* Maker's Group \*

## ***Ideas for Study and Classes***

U3A (University of the Third Age) \* Instrumental lessons \* Short Courses through TAFE or University \* Online Classes \* Cooking Classes \* Faith based Study Group \* First Aid Classes \*

## ***Ideas for Sports Clubs and Groups***

\* Taekwondo/Karate/Martial Arts \* Netball \* Youth Group \* Sailing class \* Dance Class \* Soccer \* Boulderling Club \* Salsa Dancing Group \* Rally Driving Group \* Parkour \* Fencing Classes \* Table Tennis Club \* Water Ski-ing \* Yoga \* Nippers/Surf Life-Saving \* Rowing Club \* Callisthenics Group \* Sporting Shooters Group \* Cheerleading Classes \* Golf Club \* Tennis Club \* AusKick/AFL \* Cricket Club \* Dragon Boating \* Snow Ski-ing \* Gymnastics \* Pony Club \* Athletics \* Bowling \* Pilates \* Swimming \* Kite Flying \* Hiking Group \* Cycling Club \* Archery \* Rally Driving Club \* Bocce Club \* Frisbee Golf \* Touch Football \* Tai Chi \* Zumba \* Softball/Baseball/T'ball \* Travel Club \* Hockey \* Lacrosse \* Lawn Bowls \*

## ***Ideas for Service Organisations and Volunteering***

\* Rotary \* Zonta \* Lions \* Apex \* CWA (Country Women's Association) \* Church Guild \* Red Cross \* Sports Clubs \* Soroptimists \* LGBTI Groups \* Community Centre \* Meals on Wheels \* Kiwanis \* Botanic Gardens \* Zoo \* RSL/Military Groups \* Country Fire Services \* State Emergency Services \* Animal Shelters \* TedX \* Neighbourhood Watch \* Business Networking Groups \* Trees for Life \* Amnesty International \* Greenpeace \* Royal Flying Doctor Service \* Indigenous Organisations \* Practising English with new arrivals or overseas students \*

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## ***Ideas for Youth Organisations***

\* Scouts \* Guides \* Church Youth Groups \* Air Cadets \* Army Cadets \* Boys Brigade \* St John Ambulance Cadets \* Young Scientists of Australia \* Police and Community Youth Club \* Youth Parliament \* Minus 18 LGBTI Youth \*

## ***How to Start Once You've Got an Idea***

Once you've found something you want to try, you'll want to find a local group. Local libraries are usually chock full of staff who love to help you find community groups and activities. Some Local Councils have local area guides, and often supermarkets have noticeboards too. Your local paper might have a section on local activities and Google can be a big help – just do a search for the activity and your area “drumming and St Kilda” for example. Local Area Co-ordinators and Support Coordinators can help you get in touch with local groups if you need some support. They can often make that first phone call for you, and check out their accessibility and help the group meet your needs. Sometimes you can even use your NDIS funding to pay to start out with a new activity if you haven't been out and about much.

## ***Things to ask a New Club or Group***

Your questions will depend on your individual needs, but most people will want to at least ask the first few on this list:

- When do you meet?
- Where do you meet?
- How much does it cost?
- How many people will there be?
- Is your toilet fully accessible?
- Is there an area I can go when I want a bit of space away from people?
- Do you have a hearing loop?
- Do you have secure fences?
- Is there somewhere nearby for my assistance dog to toilet?
- Do you have accessible parking nearby?

Then it's time to bite the bullet and give it a go. Maybe bring a friend or trusted support worker, or family member for your first visit. And if it doesn't go really well, you or a friend could talk to the group leaders and see how they can improve their welcome and accessibility, or you could try something else that interests you if you just didn't like it!

## **Where you can find more information**

*Discover a Hobby* website has information on how to start a new hobby, where to find lessons, online instructional videos and pictures, and the links to beginner's equipment,

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books, and videos. <http://www.discoverahobby.com/> Do be warned though, that this is a commercial website with advertising.

Co-authored by: [The Growing Space](#)

