



## HYDROTHERAPY (WATER WALKING) VOLUNTEER

Thank you for your support of **Multiple Sclerosis Auckland** by offering to help with a hydrotherapy class as one of our volunteers; it really is very much appreciated.

Multiple Sclerosis is a degenerative condition of the central nervous system which includes the brain and spinal cord. People who suffer from Multiple Sclerosis often can present very differently. Some people will experience mild symptoms over their lifetime while others can have relapses followed by incomplete remission where their disability may worsen over time. Other people may experience a slow progressive form of Multiple Sclerosis where their symptoms slowly worsen with no times of remission.

Although people can present with very differing symptoms, there are some main categories which commonly affect people living with MS and which we must be aware of during hydrotherapy.

- Fatigue and low energy
- Speech and swallowing
- Weakness
- Thinking and memory
- Spasticity and stiffness
- Pain

During the hydrotherapy class there will be a physiotherapist from Rope Neuro Rehabilitation who has experience with Multiple Sclerosis and hydrotherapy groups. The physiotherapist leads the class in specific exercises suitable for all Members and may be in or out of the pool depending on which they feel is most beneficial for that class.

### **A few volunteer guidelines...**

Although each physiotherapist runs their class differently from others, here are a few guidelines that help us work as a team and provide the safest and most beneficial hydrotherapy class for our Members. There are usually two volunteers at each hydrotherapy session. Volunteers are required to arrive 10 minutes before class to help the physiotherapist set up equipment. This is a good time for the volunteers to agree on how the roles are to be split equally.

#### **1. Ensure that at least one volunteer is out of the pool until all Members of the group are in the pool**

The job here is making sure that everyone has put their swim belt on correctly and that those who need a hand into the pool have one readily available.

#### **2. At the end of the session one volunteer is out of the pool first, helping the Members if required**

This may include taking off their swim belts and assisting them to a seat, or wheelchair. It is important to be attentive at all times, members will often try to do things by themselves without realising that they often aren't safe.

**3. During the class, volunteers should be readily available to help Members with exercises as required.**

Although it is great for volunteers to be able to join in with the group for exercises, you must also be available as a helping hand throughout the session.

**4. All equipment (boards and swim belts) must be taken back to the storage after all the Members have got out of the pool**

**5. If unsure about how to get someone in and out of the pool please clarify with the physiotherapist**

There is a hoist operating at all pool groups so that if a Member is struggling to get in or out of the pool we are able to use a piece of equipment that can do the job for them. A trained lifeguard will always be able to lead a hoist transfer but sometimes you may be required to help the Member by lifting their feet or assisting getting them up into a standing position. A Member may also require help getting up or down the stairs so please clarify with the physiotherapist for each individual who needs assistance.

**6. Volunteer schedule**

If there are more volunteers than required a rotating schedule should be written by the Lead volunteer of the Pool. If you are unable to make a session, please let the lead volunteer or Field Worker know with as much notice as possible. If a volunteer cannot be found please let MS Auckland office know ASAP on (09) 845 5921.

If you have any queries or questions please do not hesitate to ask the physiotherapist at the pools or **Multiple Sclerosis Auckland** on (09) 845 5921.

Thanks again for your help,

Kind Regards

Multiple Sclerosis Auckland & Rope Neuro Rehabilitation