

Meet Meg Elliott



- 1. Which sport or physical activity are you currently involved in?**
Northampton Sailability and dinghy sailing
- 2. How did you get involved in the sport/activity?**
My father is a volunteer at Northampton sailing club and after I'd had a serious accident, he thought that it would be good for me.
- 3. What do you enjoy most about being active?**
I stop feeling stressed and anxious and I like how my body feels alive after doing activity.
- 4. Who (or what) inspired you to get involved in sport/physical activity?**
I had a bad accident and I lost a lot of physical strength and mobility. Sport is a brilliant way to build it back up again and to achieve outside of not being able to work. I am disabled with a Traumatic Brain Injury and minor stroke.
- 5. What has been your biggest challenge in sport/physical activity and how did you overcome it?** Fatigue and pain. I takes lots of breaks and often I go out sailing with somebody else, so it's easier for me.
- 6. How have you made being active work for you and your lifestyle?** (Have you had to juggle childcare / work responsibilities for example?)
I've got support worker hours and I've arranged it so they take me sailing and help me get changed and then they collect me from there.
- 7. What are your personal goals regarding sport/physical activity in the future?**
I want to sail in competitive races, because it involves more concentration and better boat handling.
- 8. What has been your biggest achievement since becoming active?**
I've made lots of friends, I've got greater confidence around people and in my own abilities. Very importantly, I can say where I want to sit in the boat and how to do sailing so that it suits me best with my disability, because I've overcome anxiety of other people.

What Does Sailing mean to me?

It's a chance to have fresh air and feel independence. I like it because I'm able to move swiftly in my boat when I have trouble with mobility. I had a serious accident and as a result

I need to sometimes use a wheelchair. I like the feeling of power when I am in control of a vessel and I feel important and personal freedom, because I am sailing the boat with no help from anyone else.

It takes fitness and balance, especially in a capsizable boat, which is more tippy on the water and you need to move your weight onto the side of the hull to balance against the sails. I use my arm strength when I'm steering with the tiller and pulling the main sail ropes in tighter. I use leg muscles and my core body to change sides of the deck on my knees and to hold balance within the boat. It gives me self confidence and a sense of accomplishment.

I enjoy helping others to sail and sometimes they are severely disabled and can only learn a very little, but I still enjoy taking them out for a sail in the boat. As a woman I am very caring and I enjoy looking after people when they're out in the boat with me.