Four MS-Friendly Summer Activities to Do This Summer

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Summer Activities for MSers

We're in the middle of a heat wave in the UK at the moment, so it's hard to imagine wanting to do any activity that doesn't involve sitting in front of a fan with a cold drink and not a lot of clothes on!

Heat intolerance makes summer unbearable for those with multiple sclerosis (MS) but with some thought and careful planning, there are some MS-friendly summer activities we can still enjoy.

Planning Ahead With MS During the Summer

As with anything MS related, planning is the key. Long gone are the days when I could be spontaneous and go out somewhere on a whim. Now I have to think of all possible disaster scenarios and do a complicated risk assessment in my head before attempting any activity.

The most important thing for me is parking. I rely on a mobility scooter and have a hoist that helps me get it into the car. With the help of hand controls, I can drive the car safely, but I need an accessible parking spot to ensure I have enough room around the car to get out and operate the hoist.

I also need to think about bathrooms. Bladder problems mean I need to use the bathroom frequently and there must be accessible facilities to avoid any unwanted accidents!

Access generally is an issue too. There's no point in going anywhere where there are stairs or gravel paths as this is impossible on my scooter. It' s not good on wet grass either and steep hills (especially in the rain) don't do it a lot of good.

With all this to think about it's amazing I ever go anywhere especially when you factor fatigue into the mix. I've had to cancel many an outing or social engagement before due to fatigue engulfing me for no apparent reason. Sometimes the effort involved seems to outweigh any benefits of going out at all, but if we gave in to MS all the time it would be a dull and frustrating life!

It's wonderful when a destination has thought about all these things in advance.

Visit the Gardens or Historic Sites

In the UK, we have an organization called the National Trust who own and maintain stately homes and gardens. Many of these old houses were built with extensive land so only the young and fit can manage seeing everything without help.

They cater for the elderly and disabled by hiring out wheelchairs and mobility scooters so even if you don't own one and use it all the time there's always the option of hiring one at the venue.

These places are usually geared up for mobility issues and there are plenty of accessible bathrooms, ramps, and handrails. It's worth checking out what's in your area as places have to be more disability aware these days.

Theme Parks

Theme parks are usually really good too, and the parks have accessible pathways and all the amenities you' expect. One bonus about being disabled in the UK is that you get to bring a carer for free so my husband and I have saved a lot of money this way!

Concerts and Festivals

Another option in the summer is open-air concerts or festivals.

I'm taking my daughter to a Little Mix concert next week and we have disabled access tickets so can watch from a raised platform. I'm hoping she'll be able to see much better from there and we got her ticket free as my carer. There have to be some perks, right!

As with all things MS though, it's best to double check by calling beforehand to make sure your idea of accessible is the same as theirs!

Summer Is for Traveling

I've also had great experiences with public transport, and I think the bus and train companies have to cater to disabled people better these days. I even went from London to Brussels on the Eurostar last year and it only took two hours – which was terrific.

Using the accessible bathroom while hurtling on a high-speed train wasn't much fun, but I managed it. Luckily for me, the staff were all helpful too, and nothing was too much trouble when they were helping me on and off the trains.

I like getting a bus with my children to the city where we live which is a traditional, British seaside resort. We have a pier with rides and a long stretch of beach I can easily trundle along on my scooter. There are plenty of places to stop and eat so this is a lovely, summer activity, especially as it's always cooler by the ocean.

For me though, the best way to enjoy the summer is a little closer to home. I'm lucky enough to have a large, sunny backyard, so I can enjoy the outdoors easily. I have a ramp for easy access, and we installed a basketball hoop and other ball games for the kids to enjoy so when the fatigue gets the better of me that's where you'll find m