

## Arne Hagen, 50+ year old professional, Norway

I was a Norwegian Air Force Colonel, stationed in England, and one Sunday evening, when I was going to bed, I walked around the living room, turning off the lights and suddenly I fell and couldn't move. I dragged myself to the telephone; the ambulance arrived almost immediately and took me to hospital where they found that I had suffered a big stroke.

When I started rehabilitation, I didn't have any balance at all, it took me two weeks to sit up, after that I learned to get from the bed to a wheelchair and after two months I was able to walk. Once my blood pressure stabilized with medication, I got into the swimming pool with assistance. I didn't have enough balance to know if I was on my back or front. I was taught to swim again and one day I climbed up to the diving platform about 3 meters up and dived into the water. As an Air Force Colonel, it was very hard when they told me I couldn't go back to work and, during the rehabilitation period, I got very depressed. My therapists saw that one day I was making progress and the next day I wasn't. It was more difficult when I got back to Norway, having been an active person, taking initiatives and now I was just sitting there. That is a tremendous challenge because it is a completely new life that you move into.