

Introduction to the Steps to Ageing Well Series

The information contained in the Steps to Ageing Well series is designed to help spinal cord injured (SCI) people consider the possible effects of ageing, tips on how to prevent those effects and suggestions on managing the problems as they arise.

In addition to the information and helpful hints, comments from SIA members who have lived for many years with an SCI, have been included to provide further insight into key areas of ageing with an SCI.

There are numerous definitions of ageing. Here are examples:

“The process of becoming older, a process that is genetically determined and environmentally modulated.”

Medicinenet.com

“The decline of biological functions and of the ability to adapt to metabolic stress. In humans, the physiological developments are normally accompanied by psychological and behavioural changes, and other changes, involving social and economic factors, also occur.” Britannica.com

One of the issues faced is the increased need for assistance with daily activities. Fatigue and weakness are reasons people ask for additional help, especially with such areas as transferring, toileting and dressing.

In parallel, partners/carers may well be experiencing the effects of ageing themselves and may not be able to offer the same level of assistance as previously given.

Ageing can start earlier in SCI people and the length of time since injury is a major contributing factor. There are many ways to approach the inevitable effects of ageing with some schools of thought even suggesting one should “attribute nothing to age”. But by being realistic and prepared, the journey can be a comfortable one. A high percentage (64%) of SCI people rate their quality of life as ‘good’ right up to the latter stage of their lives.
