

The International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF)

Individualized Exercise Prescriptions for People with Disabilities



What is the ICF?¹

The ICF provides a standard language for classifying health and changes in body function and structure. ICF helps identify how a person can function in a standard environment and in his usual environment. It differs from previously developed functioning assessments in that it accounts for environmental and personal factors.

Who can use the ICF?

The ICF is beneficial to health care providers, caregivers (including parents), and fitness professionals because it identifies factors that may prevent or enhance a person's participation in a specific physical activity.

How do we use the ICF?

Use the ICF like a needs assessment or as an outcome evaluation. By focusing on environmental and personal factors that result from or contribute to the individual's level of function and situation, a more personalized plan of action can be developed.

***The ICF emphasizes function,
NOT the health condition, and
categorizes the situation,
NOT the person.¹***

The ICF identifies three levels of functioning:²

- Body or body part
- Person
- Person in an environment or social context

ICF Components²

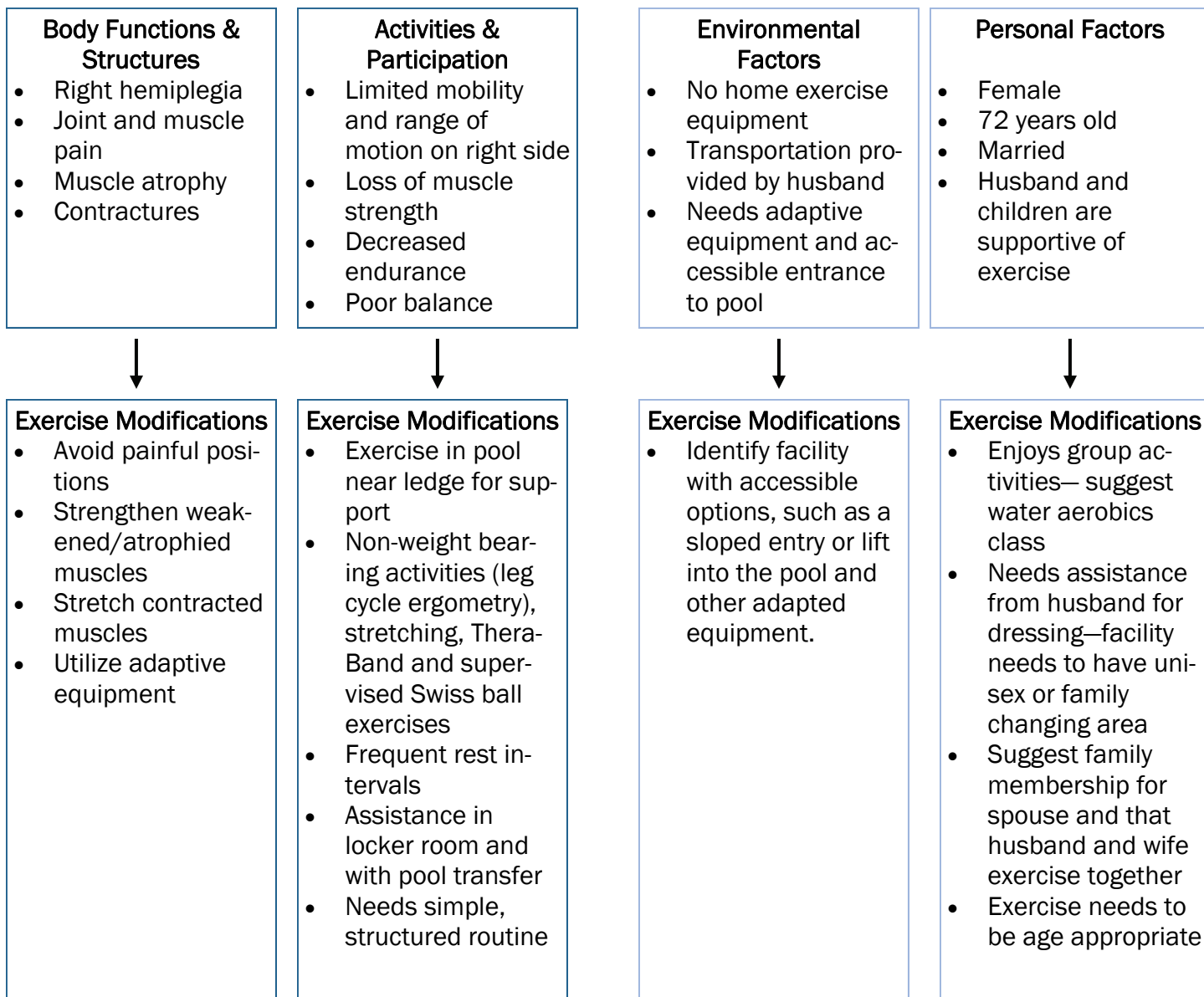
- * Body functions are the physiological functions of body systems.
- * Body structures are anatomical parts of the body such as organs, limbs, and their components.
- * Impairments are problems in body function or structure such as a significant deviation or loss.
- * Activity is the execution of a task or action by an individual.
- * Participation is involvement in a life situation.
- * Activity limitations are difficulties an individual may have in executing activities.
- * Participation restrictions are problems an individual may experience in life situations.
- * Environmental factors make up the physical, social, and attitudinal environment.



Application of the ICF: A sample assessment¹

Purpose: Develop a cardiovascular rehabilitation plan

Health condition: Stroke survivor



References

1. Use of the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health to prepare individualized exercise prescriptions for people with disabilities. [Electronic fact sheet]. (2006). Chicago, IL: National Center on Physical Activity and Disability [Producer and distributor]. Available from http://www.ncpad.org/fitt/fact_sheet.php?sheet=459&view=all. Accessed June 18, 2007.
2. World Health Organization. (2002). Towards a common language for functioning, disability and health: ICF. Geneva, Switzerland. Available from <http://www.who.int/classifications/icf/site/beginners/bg.pdf>. Accessed July 12, 2007.

For More Information:

The President's Council on Physical Fitness & Sports
Voice: 202-690-9000
Online: www.fitness.gov

The National Center on Physical Activity & Disability
Voice and TTY: (800)900-8086
Online: www.ncpad.org