



## How to walk 1: How I Joined The Disabled Community

By Elizabeth Starr

So I became a hemiplegic wheelchair-user 3 years ago when I randomly had a brain haemorrhage. It was very dramatic and I nearly died and I spent a year in rehab, during which I wrote a blog called How To Walk. We've linked that blog<sup>1</sup> if you want to read my descriptions of being paralysed at 22 and my thoughts on faith in that. Since then, I've regained a lot of mobility and learned a lot of new skills, but I still use a wheelchair to get around.

Short story is, I've never been very sad about having to use a wheelchair and I'm kind of honoured to join the club (like have you SEEN a wheelchair backflip??). Jesus said the first shall be last and the last shall be first, so being in a minority is hardly a bad thing. It's not just becoming disabled, it's joining a new community. That's quite a fun thing? I'd grown up as a Christian and done most of my angsting with God as a teenager, and I decided God could have my body long before I suddenly found myself in hospital. I'd been well-equipped by the church to face challenges.

I left rehab for the real world full of the self-confidence of youth, going back to finish my last year of uni. The poor rehab staff were put into a mini-panic to learn I wanted to leave so soon. I decided university was more important for my career than a skill like being able to walk. I dedicated my undergraduate dissertation to the neuro-psychologists who were more worried about me doing a dissertation than I was. The world is expectedly not suited for me. I had pretty low expectations of the world's access, but it's one thing to know society is stacked against you as a disabled person (but there are people trying to change that!), and another to experience it. Hopefully I'll be sharing some stories of situations I've been in which made my wheelchair awkwardly obvious. I'm very aware of how fresh I sound, and I hope it's at least entertaining.

### Questions to ask yourself:

- Does my relationship with God depend on what I can do?
- What communities am I in?

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1 <https://howtowalkbyelizabethstarr.blogspot.com/2019/04/1-hello-and-welcome-to-my-blog.html>