



**nurse  
anna**

## What, realistically, can I do after my ABI?

One of the best things you can do is try and keep positive. Right now it feels like your whole world has come crashing down around you and all of your dreams are broken, but things can change over time.

Everyone has dreams and things they want to achieve in life and those dreams can make us really excited. For some people it is all they can think about. Some people want to be doctors, others want to be pilots, other people want to be fire fighters and others want to drive ambulances.

Hurting your head is a big deal because things change. Maybe you struggle learning things or maybe your body doesn't do what you want it to. All of these things can add up and can stop you from doing the things you wanted to do.

It is really funny, when we are told we can't do something, for some people it just makes us want to do it more. This can sometimes be a good thing as we can try and achieve things to prove people wrong.

An ABI can make achieving things more difficult. The brain is so delicate and complicated and it does so many different things. Doctors and neuroscientists are still learning about how the brain works and still aren't sure what everything does exactly.

When you hurt your brain, it is very hard for the doctors to know what you have damaged exactly and what part of your body, learning or personality will be affected. There is much more about this in our 'All about the brain section'.

The doctors have no way of really knowing how your brain will adjust and how you will 'compensate' for the things in your brain that have gone wrong. It is therefore really hard to say how you will recover and what you will be like in the future.

They do know that time can be a good healer if you have good rehabilitation, but even that isn't the same as making a 'full recovery' and getting completely back to 'normal'.

For these reasons it is hard for anyone to say what you can do realistically. If you have damaged your 'learning centre' in the temporal





**nurse  
anna**

and frontal lobe, you can find it hard to learn new things. Being at school can be tricky because you don't understand the classwork or what your teachers are saying to you. This can make getting good grades hard and you will need good grades to get into medical school or train to be a lawyer or a vet.

Maybe you hurt the 'movement centre' in your brain and find it hard walking or standing up straight. You might find physical things tiring and maybe you can't run and play football anymore. This is hard too as you realise, over time, that your dreams of becoming a professional footballer will not happen.

After an ABI it would be really unfair to put such incredible expectations on yourself or for your friends and family to put such expectations on you either. Focussing on dreams and goals that you are just not able to achieve will only make you feel disappointed and sad. Over time this could lead to depression and really affect your happiness. It is far better to concentrate on what you can do and improve on that. Perhaps you can't run around anymore but you could develop your artistic talents or computer skills. People with an ABI can go on to do all sorts of exciting and interesting things with their lives.

Parents can sometimes be funny about goals and dreams too. They can have lots of dreams and plans for you and it is not uncommon for your parents to want you to full fill all sorts of ambitions they have. This can put you under a lot of pressure as your parents try and live their dreams through you. Sometimes parents can struggle with your ABI too and they can find it difficult to accept that perhaps you won't be a doctor or lawyer. They will come around in time. They sometimes need time to adjust to reality too. It is a natural thing for everyone to feel a bit sad over the things they thought would happen but now won't.

