


# Machine provides rehab for stroke sufferers

By Courtney Hammond - **The Northern Advocate**

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Irene Frost helps stroke sufferer Mary-Anne Stone on the new, \$10,000 'MOTOmed' machine at Kensington Fitness.  
Photo / Michael Cunningham

Northland stroke sufferers are being helped with their recovery thanks to a \$10,000 exercise machine.

The new rehabilitation and exercise machine has recently been bought to support the recovery of the 300 Northlanders who have a stroke every year.

The 'MOTOmed' has been bought by the Northland Stroke Community Assistance Fund and installed at Kensington Fitness as a part of their Movement Rehabilitation Programme funded by the Ministry of Health.

The MOTOmed is a rehabilitation exercise machine for stroke survivors that exercises inactive limbs and aims to stimulate blood circulation, build muscle strength, reduce spasticity, improve co-ordination and counter onset health problems caused by lack of mobility.

The machine was funded by the Northland Stroke Community Assistance Fund which started in 2015 following a large bequest. The fund is used to assist people in Northland affected by strokes and help them to recover.

Isobel Finlayson, a physiotherapist working with patients at Kensington Fitness using the MOTOMed, has noticed many benefits for the recovering patients.

Patients using the machine have the ability to "exercise their arms or legs while remaining seated in their wheelchair, which is very important if they are unable to transfer onto existing exercise equipment", Ms Finlayson said.

A person with a low fitness level is not restricted in the level of intensity of the exercise as they can exercise using the MOTOMed at a lower mode. While exercising, patients receive visual feedback to inform them about the side of their body affected by the stroke which raises their awareness about how to move the inactive arm or leg.

There is also a passive mode installed in the machine which relieves pain and increases the flexibility of patients. Having the ability to exercise provides a "sense of satisfaction" for patients when they can move the stroke affected side of their body.

Stroke survivors using the new machine have also given great feedback and have seen positive results.



Ms Finlayson said many patients have experienced extreme relief from pain and have gained flexibility.

"A lady who had had a stroke while in Australia was pleased to see the MOTOMed as she had been using one in her early stages of rehabilitation. One man who has suffered from a very severe stroke has noticed a great difference after using the MOTOMed and he now has the strength to lift his leg into the car without needing to assist it with his other arm," Ms Finlayson said.

Every day, 24 New Zealanders have a stroke and one in four of them occur in people under the age of 65. A stroke is caused by a blockage, such as a clot, impeding the blood flow to the brain or when a blood vessel bleeds into the brain.

Strokes can be fatal and they are New Zealand's third largest killer, causing almost 2500 deaths every year. Strokes often leave survivors disabled and needing significant help with carrying out daily tasks.