

# Tissue ball

## Summary

Wiping your own nose with a tissue may seem a commonplace activity and not one to get excited about, but Bernard was overjoyed when he was once again able to carry out that simple act. His motor neurone disease had progressed to the stage that he was unable to grip a tissue and raise it to his face.

Remap volunteer Allen Norris enjoys the challenge of solving problems like that presented by Bernard. His elegant solution was made from a toy ball and provided an immediate answer to the challenge.

## The challenge

Bernard was in his early 80s with the condition Motor Neurone Disease. Reliant on his wife for most of the day he was gradually losing his remaining fine motor skills. Remap Norfolk West had helped him by making him a stand for the newspaper rack, when he mentioned his frustration of not being able to wipe his own nose without assistance. He had no movement in the left hand, but could raise his right arm and had movement in two outer fingers on the right hand, albeit with a weak grip.

## The solution



It was realised that he could grip a ball, roughly the size of a tennis ball, and that this might provide the solution. The difficulty was in finding a suitable ball that was the correct size, lightweight and flexible. Remap volunteer Allen Norris went rummaging in the stock room of a local toy shop and found two balls that seemed to fit the bill. He then created the jaw effect on the ball by cutting it with dressmaker's pinking shears.

## The outcome

Bernard was overjoyed with the result. He found he could apply sufficient grip to use the ball to grasp a tissue and it gave him much needed independence and a boost to his self-esteem.

Allen Norris said: "The smile on Bernard's face when it worked meant so much to me. It was absolutely magic and I hope what I've done might encourage people to do something similar. I enjoy the challenge of solving problems like this and helping Bernard and others live as independently as possible."