

Andrew Marr makes big strides as he is seen training in the park without a walking stick alongside his fitness guru

- Andrew Marr was working out in West London unaided
- Seen walking without a stick for the first time since stroke
- Broadcaster suffered a stroke nine months ago

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Defiantly striding through the park with his fitness guru, Andrew Marr is seen without a walking stick for the first time since his stroke.

Nine months after suffering the debilitating illness, which doctors warned he would be lucky to survive, the broadcaster seems well on the road to recovery.

On Sunday, clutching his walking stick, he returned to his political show on BBC1 – to the delight of guests and viewers.



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Fighting fit: Andrew Marr was seen in West London working with trainer Tom Balchin

Just a few days later he was in Richmond Park, West London, being put through his paces by trainer Tom Balchin, a stroke survivor and the founder of Action for Rehabilitation from Neurological Injuries.

During the one-hour exercise session, Marr was seen using benches to perform press-ups, taking a power walk through the park and using Dr Balchin's arms for resistance to help improve his upper body strength.

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Keep-fit addict Marr, 53, was left with seriously impaired mobility down his left side after tearing an artery in his neck while working out on a rowing machine in his garden shed in East Sheen, West London in January.

He suffered bleeding on the brain after symptoms of a 'blinding headache and flashes of light' but did not call for an ambulance until the next day.



Remarkable recovery: Just days after his return to his television show, Andrew Marr was walking without the aid of a stick



Back on track: Andrew Marr used a cane when he returned to his self-titled show for the first time since his stroke on Sunday

He spent two months in hospital. At one stage his wife Jackie was warned that if he lived he would be left unable to talk, walk, eat, drink or hear. Since then, Marr's recovery has been nothing short of extraordinary.

He has described Dr Balchin as 'a wise bully' and 'an amazing independent trainer' who has helped him to get better.

Dr Balchin said Marr's successes were clear, adding: 'He has done exceedingly well and has learned all kinds of gross motor-movement techniques, including getting down and up from the floor in under ten seconds without the help of a chair or support.'

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'This is an astonishing achievement. He has worked incredibly hard on this and on his upper-limb training, which is very hard work. His grit and perseverance are unusual and his recovery will certainly be excellent if he keeps going at this rate.

'He has been encouraged from the very start with me to try and match what he does with his right-hand [less affected] upper limb with his left [more affected] limb.'

The broadcaster is back presenting the Andrew Marr Show each Sunday and plans to return to Radio 4's Start The Week soon.

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