

13 Best Stroke Treatment Options in the Hospital, Clinic, & Home

February 2, 2018



Today we're running down the best – and some of the worst – stroke treatment options available in the hospital, clinic, and home. You just might be surprised by what they are... Let's get started.

Stroke Treatment Options in the Hospital

Stroke is a medical emergency that occurs when the supply of blood to the brain is compromised by either a clogged or burst artery. This causes brain damage and can sometimes lead to death. Therefore, stroke requires *immediate* medical attention.

The faster treatment is administered, the more brain they can save. When it comes to stroke, *time is brain!*

1. Treating Brain Bleeds with Surgery



A hemorrhagic stroke is caused when an artery in the brain bursts, causing blood to flow into the area surrounding the brain. This type of stroke is tricky to resolve. **Non-surgical options** can be explored, but **surgery** is often the best way to treat it.

Guide: [Types of Surgery After Stroke](#) 1/2/2018

2. Treating Blood Clots with Drugs or Surgery

An ischemic stroke occurs when a blood clot clogs an artery in the brain. The best way to treat an ischemic stroke is with **tPA** – a clot-dissolving drug. When that's not an option, a small mechanical device inserted through surgery can be used to remove the clot. When a minor stroke or TIA is happening, sometimes **aspirin** can help since it thins the blood.



However, do NOT self-diagnose and give someone aspirin when they look like they're having a stroke – it could potentially kill them. You don't know if they're having an ischemic or hemorrhagic stroke, and taking aspirin during a hemorrhagic stroke could be fatal.

Guide: [The Ultimate Guide to Treatment After Stroke](#) 9/9/2016

Best Stroke Treatment Options in the Clinic

In the hospital, you'll receive emergency care to get the stroke under control. Then, as soon as humanly possible... rehabilitation will begin, but where? After discharge from the hospital, you will either go to an inpatient rehabilitation facility or you will be sent home.

Guide: [Where Will the Stroke Recovery Process Take You?](#) 1/22/2018

For those who go to the clinic, here are the best treatment options they might provide.

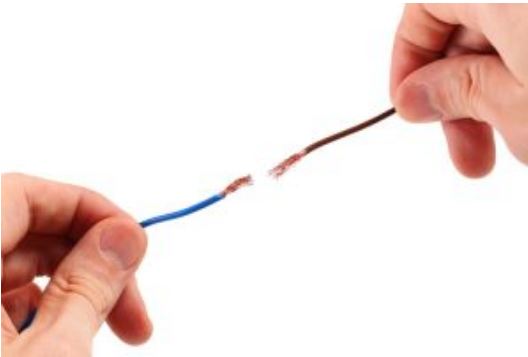
3. The Best Clinical Treatment for Movement

Rehab exercise is the #1 best way *by far* to regain movement after stroke. Here's why:



Difficulty with movement is the most common stroke side effect. When the part of the brain that controls movement (the motor cortex) is damaged by stroke, it can lead to movement impairments. The best way to regain movement after stroke is by **activating neuroplasticity**, a process the brain uses to rewire itself. Neuroplasticity allows healthy parts of the brain to take over.

Rewiring the Brain



Neuroplasticity is activated through repetition. Whatever you do over and over and over is what your brain gets good at. Repetition is the king of skill. For this reason, therapists will have stroke patients perform lots of repetition of various rehabilitation exercises in the clinic. The point of rehab exercise isn't to retrain the body, but to **retrain the brain**.

Guide: [Rehab starts in the brain, not the body.](#) 3/24/2017

4-6. Clinical Treatments for Movement



During inpatient rehabilitation, therapists will use a wide variety of technology to help you get your mobility back. Some examples are:

- Robotics like assisted walking machines
- Electrical stimulation
- Recreational therapy like pool therapy

These are very powerful forms of rehabilitation, and the high-tech equipment available in most clinics will really boost your recovery.

7. The Best Clinical Treatment for Language Difficulties

The best treatment for **aphasia** (difficulty with language after stroke) is to work with a speech-language pathologist (SLP). An SLP can help run you through specific exercises to help you retrain your brain and relearn the process of language. For example, they might have you do tongue exercises and play naming games. Your SLP will tailor your regimen to your specific needs.

8-11. The Best Unconventional Stroke Treatment Options



There are some pretty cool high-tech treatment options outside of the clinic. The best one, in our opinion, is [stem cell therapy](#) (12/29/2017).

A few other great treatment options are:

- Oxygen therapy
- Magnetic brain stimulation
- Acupuncture

If you can afford these extra services and believe they could help your recovery, then give it a shot! Be sure to run the idea by your doc first.

Best Stroke Treatment Options at Home

Once you're discharged from the clinic, you can continue to go to outpatient therapy. However, outpatient therapy is less intense than inpatient therapy. Therefore, if you want to keep improving, you need a solid home therapy regimen to go along with it. Here's our best recommendations:

12. The Best Home Treatment for Movement



The best way to keep improving movement at home is to keep doing your **rehab exercises** (9/25/2015)! Your therapist will probably send you home with some sheets of written exercises, but those are hard to stick to.

To give yourself an edge, try using motivating devices like **FitMi home therapy** to keep yourself accountable to your therapy. FitMi helps you accomplish 12 times more repetition than the average visit to the clinic, which speeds up the rewiring process!

For Hand Improvement

Two great ways to improve hand function at home is with **MusicGlove hand therapy** and mirror therapy. MusicGlove is a music/gaming tool that helps retrain the brain by motivating high repetition for various hand exercises. It's one of the best treatments because it's fun to use and you'll actually end up using it!



Mirror therapy (9/8/2015) is another great treatment – especially if you have **paralysis in your hand**. Mirror therapy uses a tabletop mirror to ‘trick’ your brain into thinking that you’re moving your affected hand. This helps activate neuroplasticity and introduce movement into your hand.

Worst Stroke Treatment Options

13. Compensation Techniques

The worst way to treat stroke is with compensation techniques. Compensation techniques are shortcuts that help you get things done. While they're very useful and often necessary for your safety, **they become counterproductive to your recovery when you get too comfortable with them.**

Here's why:

Compensation vs. Recovery

Compensation involves “performing an old movement in a new manner” while **recovery** involves “restoring the ability to perform a movement in the same manner as it was performed before injury.” For example, if you can't pick up a spoon with your right hand anymore, a compensation technique involves using your left hand instead.

Recovery, on the other hand, involves working really freaking hard to restore movement in your right hand. This way you can pick the spoon up with your right hand like you did before stroke.

Choosing Recovery

We aren't trying to demonize compensation techniques here. They're useful shortcuts that help you get things done while you're recovering from stroke. The problem happens when you get too comfortable with them, and then you don't realize when you're ready to grow past them. Because you've gotten too comfortable with your 'shortcuts,' you don't strive for recovery.

Exploring Your Potential



That's why it's important to remain curious about your potential during stroke recovery. Constantly ask yourself, "Do I still need this shortcut? Or can I try doing this the hard way today?" An example of doing things the hard way is eating food with your affected hand when it's really time-consuming but doable.

When you do things the hard way, you're stimulating your brain and working towards recovery – getting back to doing things the same way as before. It requires a lot of time and patience, but the good news is that hard work is always rewarded with RESULTS.

Guide: [Understanding when to use compensation techniques](#) 6/20/2016

Wrap Up

And there you have it! These are some of the best treatment options for stroke that you can get at the clinic or at home. Remember to emphasize lots of repetition while you participate in rehabilitation because that's how you rewire your brain.

Also remember to stay constantly curious about your potential. Try to do things without shortcuts as often as you can.

Work hard, be patient, and you will get closer and closer to a [full recovery from stroke](#) (9/28/2015).