

How to Be More Mindful during Stroke Recovery – Part 2

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In the previous article you learned that mindfulness is a great tool for stroke recovery. It changes your brain in positive ways and encourages you to take on the challenges of rehab.

Now we're going to dig into the specifics on how to put this benefit-rich lifestyle into practice!

1. Focus on the Present Moment

The essence of mindfulness is to focus on the present moment. Try to avoid letting your thoughts wander and allow yourself to *become the observer*.

Especially during rehab, focus 100% of your attention into your body, paying close attention to what your muscles are doing.

2. Remain Open & Curious

Being open means approaching your thoughts and feelings with curiosity instead of judgement. Rather than shutting down negative feelings, try to simply remain aware of them.

Acknowledge that they are only thoughts in this moment, and the next moment can be different. And if the next moment is not different, that's okay too.

3. Accept Everything Exactly as It Is

Instead of trying to force your reality to fit the image you have in your head, try to see it for what it is and let it be.

4. Release Your Attachments

This can be an especially powerful step for survivors who feel like they've lost part of themselves after stroke. Instead of clinging to the way things used to be, try to embrace life's constant flow.

Often, when we let go of our attachments, we also **let go of our fear**. And if fear has been paralyzing your stroke recovery efforts, then this could be the best thing for you.

5. Be Patient with Slow

When rehab drags on for months and years, we can grow frustrated with the lack of results or progress that we're seeing. Mindfulness acknowledges that growth happens in its own time.

This doesn't mean you should suspend your efforts and wait around for a miracle. Rather, you should keep up the effort and trust that it will be rewarded in time.

A Best-Practice for Stroke Rehab

Perhaps the best application of mindfulness for stroke recovery is *breath/movement connection*. During rehab, try to link each breath with a cycle of movement. Breathe in, move one way. Breathe out, move another way.

This **breath/movement connection** helps pull you into your body, allowing you to soak up all that stimulation from the exercise. This will help your brain heal faster – and it will also help change your brain in the positive ways we previously mentioned.