

# How to Treat Post Stroke Dementia with Cognitive Training

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There is hope for recovery from post stroke dementia. But if you find this hard to believe, we don't blame you. The current landscape is full of statements like, "There are no medications to treat dementia, but you can slow its progression."

And while slowing the progression of dementia is a small glimpse of hope, **there's room for a lot more hope; because there could also be a way to reverse it altogether.** So, why isn't anyone talking about it?

## Why No One Talks About It

Reversing post stroke dementia isn't wishful thinking. The idea is based on *quality* science (which we will discuss soon!) that, unfortunately, doesn't have much *quantity* behind it. That's why no one's talking about it.

Medical professionals are forced to be extremely cautious about what they say.

If something hasn't been proven by dozens of double-blind peer-reviewed studies, then it "lacks validity" and no one talks about it, as if it doesn't count. But refraining from talking about potentially helpful, non-invasive treatment options for dementia is honestly a little irresponsible in our opinion.

## So Let's Talk About It!

We believe that it's possible to reverse post stroke dementia – at least partially, and maybe even fully! Although the research still has a long way to go, we see no reason to withhold it from discussion – especially when **treatment has no negative side effects**. So, let's dig into it.

## How to Recover from Post Stroke Dementia

To understand how to treat post stroke dementia, we need to look at what causes it. Post stroke dementia is a form of vascular dementia that results from the brain damage caused by stroke. The damage in the brain can impair the stroke survivors cognitive skills like memory and problem solving.

**It's important to emphasize that these symptoms arise from brain damage, and although brain damage cannot be reversed, the healthy parts of the brain are capable of taking over impaired tasks.** Rewiring the brain is how all other stroke side effects are treated – so why can't it be used to treat dementia too?

## Rewiring the Brain

The process of rewiring the brain is known as neuroplasticity, the brain's ability to reorganize itself and form new neural connections. Neuroplasticity is activated by repetition. Whatever you do over and over and over is what your brain gets better at.

**Learn more:** [Why Repetition Is the Best Treatment for Stroke, December 11, 2017](#)

Each time you repeat something, you strengthen the neural connections in your brain responsible for that skill. The more you repeat, the stronger those connections become, and the stronger your skills become.

For example, someone with impaired movement after stroke can work to improve movement by doing rehab exercises over and over and over. Similarly, someone with impaired speech after stroke can regain their language skills by doing various speech exercises over and over and over. If repetitive practice can rewire the brain and heal these stroke side effects, then it can help with post stroke dementia too.

## How to Treat Post Stroke Dementia with Practice

To treat post stroke dementia, start by making note of the post stroke dementia symptoms you or your loved one has.

Then make note of which ones you have the ability to practice. We'll call these "practiceable" symptoms. Some examples of "practiceable" post stroke dementia symptoms are:

- Impaired memory
- Impaired problem solving skills

- Impaired attention
- Impaired language/communication

Whatever dementia symptoms you're struggling with, try to practice those things.

## Examples

You can get really creative with it, too.

For example, if you struggle with memory, start practicing memory games. Because of neuroplasticity, memory training can improve memory! (Also, of all the dementia symptoms, memory training has [the most research](#) behind it.) Or if you struggle with problem solving, start playing problem solving games like Sudoku.

Here's another example: If you have trouble paying attention, try having "attention practice periods" where you practice paying attention to something (like rehab exercises) for a *small* amount of time. Start with just 1 minute. Then increase it to 2 minutes. Then try 3 minutes.

**Treat your post stroke dementia symptom as skills that simply need to be relearned.** Then, try to relearn them through repetitive practice.

## Patiently and Slowly Rebuilding Your Skills

Although this is nice and simple in theory, it's going to take a LOT of hard work and consistency to see results.

If you're a caregiver, getting your loved one to practice these skills can be quite challenging.

Try your best to be patient, compassionate, and stubborn! Try to get your loved one to practice their skills every single day for a month, and see if their condition improves. Put in the reps, and see what happens.