

Our Best Exercises for Stroke Recovery (with Pictures)

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As you go searching for the best exercises for stroke recovery, it's incredibly important to consider your unique situation.

Because [every stroke is different](#), and the best exercises for you the best might not be the best for someone else.

So before we suggest some of the best exercises, we're going to tell you how to make the exercises that you're *already doing* better.

Then we will share a few examples of awesome stroke rehab exercises that came straight from our [FlintFit videos](#).

The Best Exercises All Revolve Around One Thing

You know about [neuroplasticity](#), right? We talk about it a lot on the blog because **it's the #1 thing that all stroke survivors should know about.**

To put it briefly, neuroplasticity is the mechanism that your brain uses to rewire itself after injury. It's how neurons form new connections in your brain.

And these new connections will become responsible for restoring movement in your body, among numerous other responsibilities.

In order for neuroplasticity to take place, you need [repetitive practice](#) and immaculate consistency. Let's break each of these down.

And These 2 Other Things

Repetitive practice simply involves doing exercises many times, over and over and over. This is extremely important because repetition reinforces the new neural connections in your mind.

For example, each time you perform a rubber band [exercise with your hand](#), you reinforce the neural connections responsible for hand movement in your brain. The more you exercise, the better your brain becomes at moving your hand.

As you can see, rehab has less to do with your muscles and everything to do with the brain.

Then, once you have repetitive practice down, you need to do it consistently. Without good consistency, the new connections in your brain will begin to weaken from the lack of stimulation.

It's just like learning a language. As time passes without practice, you begin to forget the language because the new neural connections in your brain begin to weaken.

As long as you're *repetitive* and *consistent* when you exercise, you will be in great shape because that's [how the brain recovers after stroke](#).

Rehab starts in the *brain*, not the body.

The Best Stroke Exercises for You Might Be Different for Someone Else

The best stroke exercises for you are the ones that are both *challenging* yet *safely doable*. As you can imagine, this looks different for almost everyone.

The best rule of thumb is to start small and slow and work your way up from there. As long as you feel challenged, then your brain has the stimulation it needs to recovery.

This is the advantage of using rehabilitation tools that incorporate different levels of difficulty. That way you can always find the perfect level of challenge.

You will achieve the most healing possible by increasing the difficulty level of your exercises as you progress.

That's the biggest benefit behind our stroke rehabilitation video program, [FlintFit](#), and our hand therapy device, [MusicGlove](#). They each feature different levels of difficulty to keep you constantly challenged.

Now let's move onto some examples.

Core Exercises

Some of the [best core exercises for stroke recovery](#) involve *isolation*.

Two excellent stroke exercises that isolate your core safely are trunk rotations (twists) and lateral trunk flexion (oblique crunches).

Trunk Rotation (Twists)

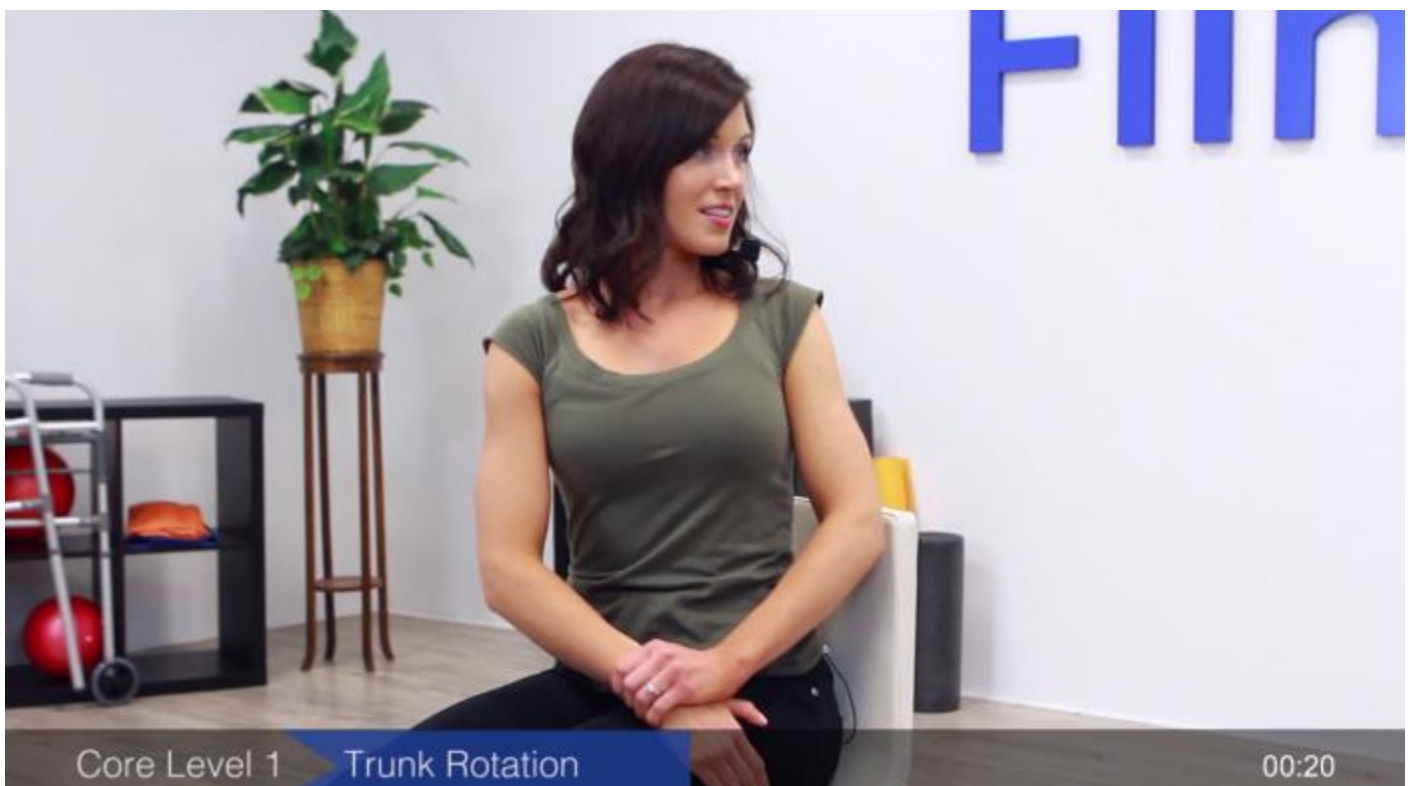


Image featuring Cassie, DPT, from FlintFit

From a seated position, place your right hand on the outside of your left thigh. With your back straight, use your arm to help twist your torso to the left. And if you can't move your right hand, then you can use your left hand to assist it.

Be sure to keep your spine straight and don't twist to the point of pain. Aim to engage your core and get a good core exercise in.

Repeat on each side 15 times.

Lateral Trunk Flexion (Oblique Crunch)



From a seated position, dip your left shoulder down towards your left hip. Then, return to an upright position by focusing on using your core to pull yourself up.

If you can't fully complete this exercise yet, then you can use your arm to push yourself back up.

Repeat on each side 15 times.

Leg Exercise

A great way to work on both your inner and outer leg control is with...

Hip Adductions



Leg Level 2 Hip Abduction

00:40



Leg Level 2 Hip Abduction

00:40

Image featuring Liliana, DPT, from FlintFit

For this exercise, sit in a chair and lift your affected leg slightly off the floor. Your leg should remain bent at 90 degrees, but your foot should hover over the floor.

Then, kick your leg outward like you're kicking a ball. Then, kick your leg inward.

Try to perform 20 repetitions.

Arm Exercises

When you exercise your arms, it's important to focus on your arm *and shoulders*. It's very important not to neglect your shoulders.

So first, we will show you a great exercise for shoulder mobility called...

Punching Movements



Image featuring Barbara, OTA, from FlintFit

While seated at a table, place a water bottle arms distance in front of you. Then, make a fist with your affected hand as best you can and glide your forearm across the table and punch the water bottle. Be sure to keep your elbow and forearm on the table.

Pay close attention to shifting your weight into your affected side and try your best to avoid letting your affected shoulder lift. Elevating your affected shoulder is your body's way of compensating for weakened or stiff shoulder muscles (and avoiding compensation is [the best way to get better](#)).

If you can't help but lift your affected shoulder, that's okay. Putting in the effort to try is still helping your brain relearn how to use those muscles.

Do 10 repetitions.

Then, the best exercise for your arms is the good, ol' classic...

Bicep Curls



To perform a bicep curl, grab a water bottle or dumbbell and hold it parallel to the floor. Then, bring it up towards your shoulder while bending at the elbow. Be sure to keep that elbow glued to your side.

Do 20 repetitions.

Too difficult? Ditch the weight and prop your arm up on a table, keeping your elbow stationary on the table to isolate your bicep.

Hand Exercise

You'll notice that all the previous exercises involve 10-20 repetitions each. And in the beginning of this article, we mentioned that you need lots of repetition in order to regain movement in your body.

It can be a slow process if you try to regain movement in your hand with just one hundred (or so) repetitions per day. And that's why rehabilitation devices like MusicGlove are the best form of hand therapy available.

[MusicGlove](#) incorporates thousands of repetition into one half hour session.

It's like fitting a week and a half of rehabilitation into *one day*.

Which is why the device can help [improve hand function quickly in just 2 weeks](#). It's the best hand therapy exercise around.

Exercise Videos for Stroke Recovery

Now that you know what the best stroke rehabilitation exercises are, it's time to put them into action.

To watch all of these exercises and hundreds more in video format, you can head over to [FlintFit.com](#) to watch them for free after signing up for a [free trial](#).

Our videos are all guided by licensed therapists, and they include great verbal and visual instruction.

We hope to see you there!