

Active Arm Exercises for Stroke Recovery

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Functional and strength training arm exercises for stroke recovery

In our last article, we covered some simple *passive arm exercises* for your at-home rehabilitation routine. Today we're covering phase 2: *active arm exercises*, including some functional and strength training moves. Alright, let's do this!

Functional Arm Exercises

To enhance **muscle control** for daily living, try these functional arm exercises that will help you regain independence around the house.

- Wrap your fingers as best as you can around a refrigerator door handle or dresser drawer and practice opening and closing them.
- Hold a bag in your hand and carry it around the house. The better you get, the heavier you can make the bag.
- Pull laundry out of the dryer, placing it in your carrying bag if you'd like

Strength Training Arm Exercises

These active exercises involve the use of dumbbells (or soup cans if you don't have access to weights). However, feel free to ditch the accessories in the beginning and work your way up to them once you've gained more strength.

Sitting Elbow Flexion

Grab your weights and sit in a comfortable seat. Then, bend your elbows to bring the weight into your chest and extend them away, making sure to keep your upper arms glued to your side the entire time. Alternate arms or do both at the same time.

Overhead Press

With your weights in hand, goalpost your arms out so that your elbows are bent at 90 degrees, your upper arms are parallel to the floor, and your palms are facing forward. Then, push the weights up over your head, bringing your arms almost into full extension over your shoulders, and lower them back down into a goalpost figure once again.

Shoulder Abduction

With your weights in hand, sit up straight with your arms resting out by your side. Then, keeping your arm straight, lift your arm away from the sides of your body up to shoulder height. You should look like a sitting "T." Hold for one second, then lower your arms and repeat.