

# How to Treat Post-Stroke Pain due to Spasticity

November 21, 2016



If you're suffering from post-stroke pain due to stiff, tight muscles, this article is for you. We will discuss how your spinal cord plays a surprising role in post-stroke pain, and then we will discuss the solution.

If you're living with chronic central pain, however, our other article on [pain management](#) may be of better assistance. Because today, we're going to talk about how to reduce pain specifically due to spasticity.

## Is the Spinal Cord the Cause of Your Pain?

The reason why muscles cramp up after stroke is because your brain has lost the ability to communicate with your muscles. Typically, your muscles are in constant communication with your brain about how much tension they're under. In turn, your brain sends messages to your muscles telling them when to contract and relax in order to maintain balance and execute tasks.

When stroke occurs, it throws this communication off. The brain cannot communicate with your muscles, so the spinal cord takes over the job. Only, that's not what the spinal cord is equipped for. Your spinal cord doesn't know how to keep your muscles under perfect tension.

The only thing your spinal cord cares about is *preventing your muscles from tearing*. So it sends signals to your muscles to keep them in a constant state of contraction – and it's this state of constant contraction that is causing pain. Now, how do we fix it?

## The Permanent Solution to Post-Stroke Pain

In order to reduce the pain in your muscles, we have to get your brain to send them a message to relax. This means that restoring brain-muscle communication is top priority. And the only way to restore that communication is through rehab exercise. We understand that when muscles are stiff and painful, the last thing you want to do is move them. But that's the only way to reduce the pain.

Each time you use your affected muscles, you send signals to your brain. When you do this repetitively, your brain starts to rewire itself and relearn how to communicate with those muscles. This is how the process of neuroplasticity works.

## Neuroplasticity to the Rescue!

Neuroplasticity is the mechanism that allows your brain to heal and rewire itself after injury. Each time you repeat your rehab exercises, you strengthen the new connections in your brain responsible for those movements. This process is how you will get your mobility back – and it's also how you can reduce pain due to spasticity.

Through repetitive practice, you can restore your brain-muscle communication and your brain can finally send messages to your muscles to RELAX! Repetitive practice is the #1 thing that every survivor should utilize to restore their mobility and reduce pain due to spasticity.

## Rehab Tools to Help

To get your reps in, you can use rehab exercises like the ones we share on our blog. However, some stroke patients have a hard time achieving a lot of reps with written exercises consistently over the long run.

To help with this, we created a home therapy device called FitMi that helps you get A LOT of repetitions in. Most patients can achieve around 400 repetitions per 30 minute session with FitMi – including those with severe impairment. That's a lot of reps. Which means that neuroplasticity is being activated to the max and you see faster results.