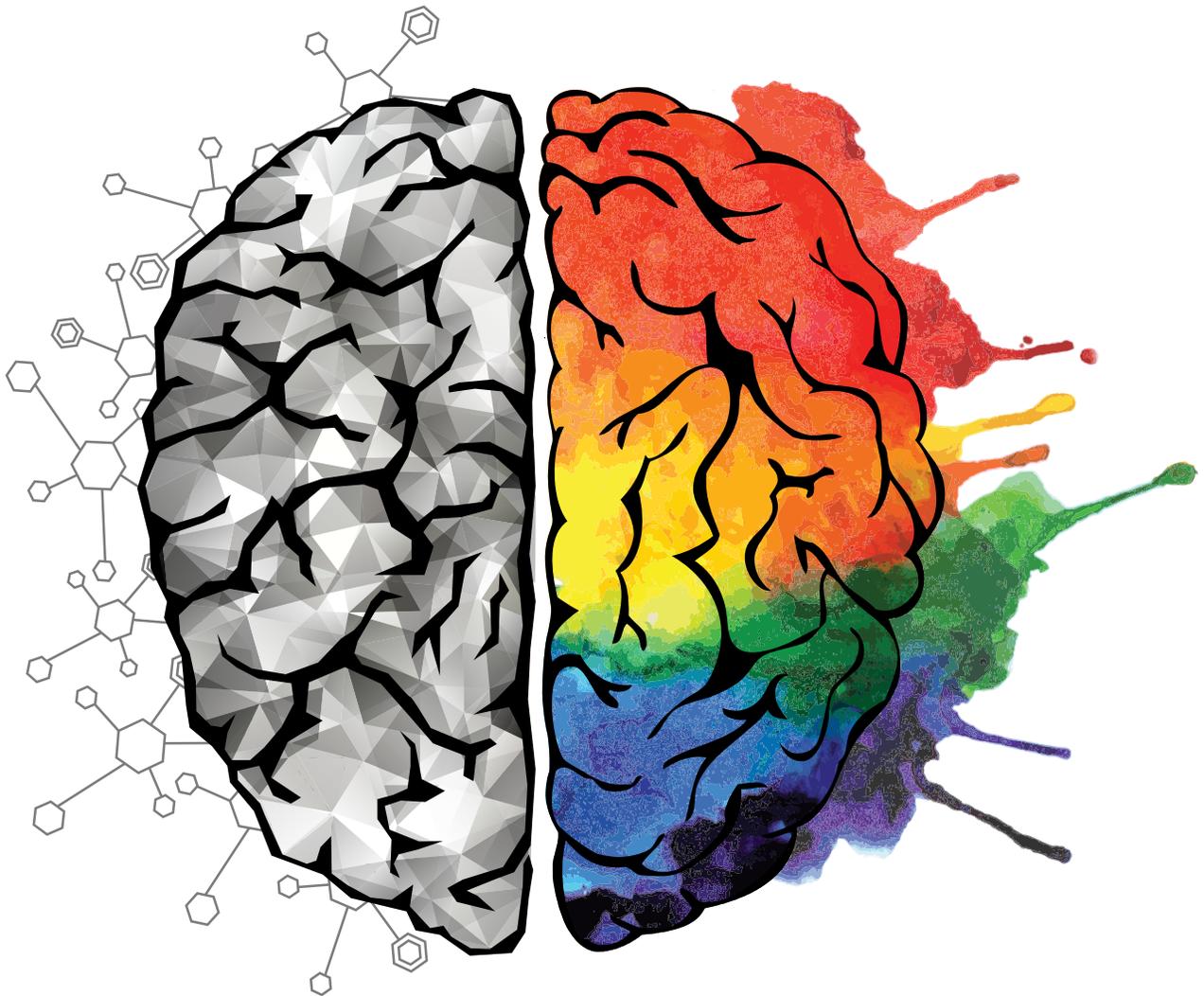


15 STROKE RECOVERY TIPS

THAT EVERY STROKE SURVIVOR MUST KNOW



HEY THERE!

If you're a stroke survivor or caregiver, then you're in for a real treat.

In this ebook, you'll learn about our top 15 tips for stroke recovery. We include plenty of unconventional advice here because, well, you could get the facts from anyone. But when it comes to the lesser known information that can really make a difference, those facts are hard to come by.

So we made this ebook to help you out.

A QUICK INTRO

But wait, let's back up a bit. Who is the company behind the ebook?

Hey, we're Flint Rehab, and we're pretty passionate about stroke recovery. Our specialty is making tools that help stroke survivors just like you improve movement after stroke — and have fun while doing it.

Creating engaging tools is our passion because, to us, traditional rehabilitation is stuck in the stone age. In order to achieve a faster recovery, you need modern innovation. And we're hard at work bringing it to you.

Along with creating rehab tools, we also manage an extensive stroke recovery blog that has 350+ articles on stroke recovery. It's an overwhelming amount of content, honestly, which is why this ebook is so great. We selected our best content so that you don't have to go reading through the entire archives.

If you'd like to say hello, swing by the blog and let's chat in the comments section. We'd love to hear from you and get to know you, too!

Alright, now let's get into our top 15 tips for stroke recovery.

1. KNOW THAT RECOVERY IS ALWAYS POSSIBLE – EVEN DECADES AFTER STROKE

Quick tip: The brain is always capable of healing at any age and any stage of recovery, so never give up.



Someone once asked us, “It’s been 13 years since my stroke, is there any hope for improvement? Or will it just be wasted effort?” And our answer was a resounding *YES, there’s always hope.*

We’ve seen a stroke patient 24-years post stroke decide that, after a decade without rehab, he wanted to improve hand function. Although his family thought it would be a waste of effort, he tried anyway.

And guess what? *He succeeded.*

2. MAKE REPETITION YOUR BEST FRIEND

Quick tip: Repetition is how you will rebuild your skills.

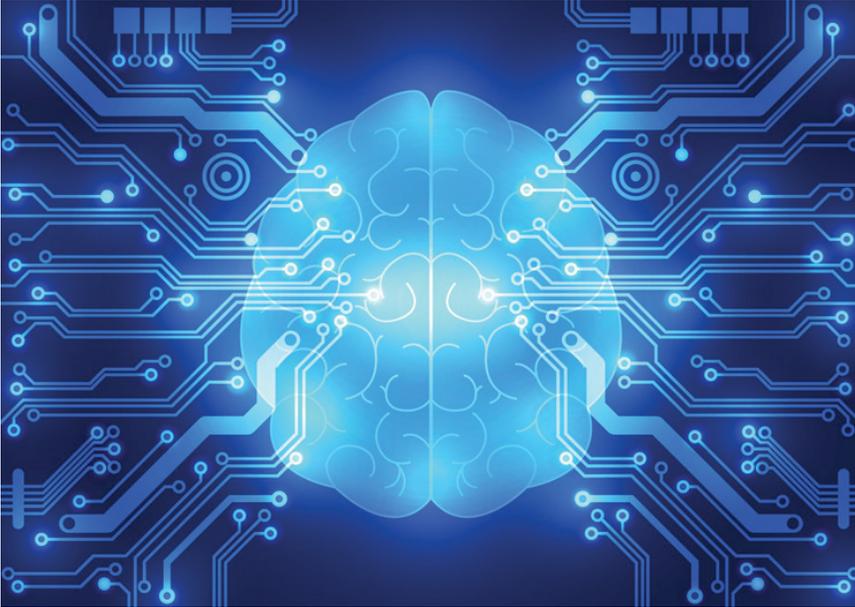
Repetition is the #1 driver of success during stroke recovery because repetition helps activate neuroplasticity, the mechanism that your brain uses to rewire itself and form new connections. The more you practice something, the stronger the connections in your brain become.

For example, if you want to improve movement in your arm after stroke, then you need to practice arm exercises repetitively, because each time you move your arm, it strengthens new connections in your brain.



3. SPEED UP YOUR RECOVERY WITH CONSISTENCY

Quick tip: Without consistency, the new connections in your brain will fade and you might lose all your hard work.



While there is no magic pill for stroke recovery, you can speed up your results by being consistent with your rehabilitation.

When the brain has consistent stimulation daily practice (or practice every other day), you will reinforce and strengthen the new connections in your brain faster, which will help you see faster results.

So be sure to stick to your regimen.

4. KNOW THAT YOU WILL EXPERIENCE DIFFERENT SIDE EFFECTS FROM OTHER STROKE PATIENTS

Quick tip: Every stroke is different and therefore every stroke recovery will be different.

Every stroke is different because stroke can happen in different areas of the brain. Since each part of the brain controls a different function, each stroke can cause different impairments.

Unfortunately, this can make it difficult for medical professionals to provide or prescribe the 'perfect' rehab treatment because there are so many different variables – known and unknown – to consider for each patient.

That's why it's important to avoid comparing your recovery to someone else's. You might heal faster than some and slower than others. Try not to bog yourself down with comparison and instead focus on the next step in front of you.

5. AVOID PERMANENT LOPSIDEDNESS

Quick tip: The phrase “use it or lose it” is backed by science. If you don’t use your muscles, your brain will forget how to use them.



During stroke recovery, the phrase “use it or lose it” is commonly used by therapists to describe the clinical condition of learned nonuse. Learned nonuse occurs when you completely stop using your affected limb, and after a while your brain literally forgets how to use it.

The best way to avoid learned nonuse is to move your affected limbs at least a little bit every day. Even passive range of motion (assisting your affected muscles through their full range of motion) helps.

6. LEARN HOW TO PERMANENTLY TREAT SPASTICITY

Quick tip: While Botox is a temporary fix, rehab exercise is a permanent fix.

Spasticity can be treated with Botox injections, which can provide the relief you need to carry out necessary tasks. Although Botox works well, it’s just a temporary solution. Once it wears off, you will need to keep going back for more injections.

To get long-term relief from painful spastic muscles, you need to address the root cause of spasticity, which is *brain-muscle communication*. When stroke disrupts your brain’s ability to communicate with your muscles, they tense up in order to protect themselves.

Therefore, the way to permanently treat spasticity is by reconnecting your mind to your muscles with rehab exercise. By activating neuroplasticity, your brain will regain control over your spastic muscles – and they will relax.

7. ASK YOUR DOCTOR ABOUT THE LOCATION OF YOUR STROKE

Quick tip: The location of your stroke will have a significant impact on your side effects and recovery process.



Typically, right-side strokes result in very different side effects than left-side strokes. Understanding which part of the brain was affected by stroke can help you anticipate and make sense of the side effects that you experience. (For example, if you had a left-side stroke and your language center was damaged, it may result in a language disorder known as aphasia.)

8. ASK ABOUT THE SIZE OF YOUR STROKE TOO

Quick tip: The size of your stroke will have a significant impact on your recovery, too.

Strokes happen in a wide spectrum of sizes. Some stroke patients sustain TIA's, which are 'mini strokes' and often result in mild/moderate side effects. Some patients recover in 6 months or a few years.

Other stroke patients sustain massive strokes, which result in severe side effects that require intensive rehabilitation to treat. Some patients take decades to recover from massive stroke. By asking your doctor the size and location of your stroke, you'll have a good sense of what to expect on the road to recovery.

9. ALWAYS STRIVE FOR A FULL RECOVERY

Quick tip: There's always hope for a full recovery.

By now, you might think that we're overly optimistic about stroke recovery – and that's the point! You see, when you fall under the limiting beliefs of a poor stroke prognosis (for example, being told that you'll be stuck in a wheelchair for the rest of your life) then you fall under the nocebo effect where bad things become true simply because you believe that it will come true. Not cool.

We would much rather have you believe in a full recovery because it puts you under the placebo effect, where good things become true because you believe they will come true. This isn't to say that you won't have to work really hard, because you will. But believing in yourself will help you achieve a higher recovery than anyone predicted.

10. GET TONS OF SLEEP – YOUR BRAIN NEEDS IT

Quick tip: It's natural to crave lots of sleep after stroke, and it's often best to listen to your body and sleep.



A lot of stroke patients are startled by how much sleep they crave after stroke. Rest assured that sleeping a lot after stroke is perfectly normal.

Your brain is hard at work healing itself right now, and that sucks up a lot of mental juice.

Plus, everyday activities might take up more energy than normal, so you need to allow yourself to get extra rest to reenergize and heal.

11. DEAL WITH PLATEAUS THE RIGHT WAY

Quick tip: When your results slow down after stroke, it's a sign to double up, not back down.

During stroke recovery, you will experience the fastest results during the first few months of recovery when your brain is in a heightened state of plasticity (meaning, your brain is trying really hard to recover). But after the first 3 months, your progress starts to slow down.

This is considered a plateau, and it is *not* a sign that you should give up. Rather, it's a sign that you need to double down. Recovery won't stop as long as you don't stop.

12. DON'T GO "TOO HARD" AND EXERCISE TOO MUCH



Quick tip: There *is* such a thing as too much exercise.

Exercising after stroke in order to regain movement is all well and good and highly encouraged. But don't over-do it.

You know your body best, and if you feel like you're pushing too hard, then ease up. Take a day off. Get some sleep. Then get back at it.

13. FEED YOUR BRAIN WITH FEEDBACK

Quick tip: Feedback provides your brain with extra stimulation and leads to faster results.

The most effective rehabilitation will provide your brain with feedback. Feedback simply means that there's a clear 'success' or 'failure' cue for your brain. You need proper feedback in order to rewire your brain effectively. When there isn't good feedback, your brain doesn't know the difference between a properly executed movement and a poor one.

14. DO WHAT MICHAEL PHELPS DID EVERYDAY

Quick tip: Visualization is a powerful neuroscience technique that can help rewire your brain and improve performance.

Michael Phelps, 18 time Olympic gold medalist, used visualization to prepare for his swim meets. He would spend time visualizing himself winning his races, and he would also visualize himself dealing with complications. That way, when complications arose, he was already wired to deal with them.

You can apply the same technique to stroke recovery. Researchers have already proved that it works.

Visualization can help rewire the brain after stroke by triggering neuroplasticity the same way that physical practice does. While visualization cannot substitute physical therapy, combining the two can lead to better results.

15. BECOME YOUR OWN STROKE RECOVERY EXPERT

Quick tip: Your recovery is in your hands, so keep educating yourself on all things stroke recovery.

You've almost made to the end, but this was just the super short story. There is much more that every stroke survivor should know, and it can be overwhelming.

That's why we highly recommend that you start reading and researching all things stroke recovery so that you know what's in your own best interest. Your doctors and therapists can only take you so far. Once you're discharged or cut off insurance, your recovery is in your hands. You've got this, and we're always here to help.

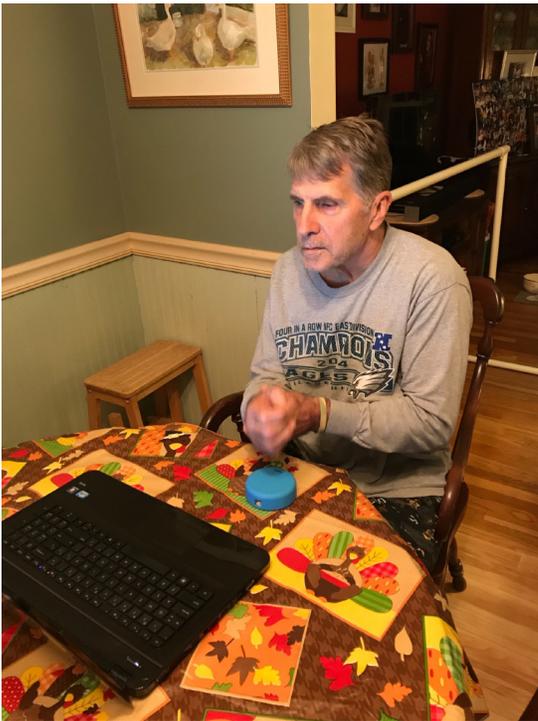
To boost stroke education and awareness, we send a weekly newsletter every Monday with new articles about stroke recovery. Keep an eye out for it - it's always chock full of great information for stroke patients and caregivers.

Talk soon.

GET INSPIRED BY THIS STROKE-PARALYSIS RECOVERY STORY

Flint Rehab's FitMi can help you improve your ability to walk, use your affected arm and hand, and gain more independence.

Here's what caregiver Lisa said about her husband's recovery from post-stroke paralysis:



"My husband suffered a stroke caused by a dissecting carotid artery in late May of this year. He lost 40% of his left hemisphere of his brain causing right side paralysis.

His speech was slightly impaired but thankfully Drs believe he is a rare left handed person with speech located in right hemisphere of his brain!

Ron was in ICU for a week, followed by a rehab hospital for five more weeks. He came home and has done outpatient therapy three days a week since.

About three weeks ago I ordered the FitMi and just this past week he moved his arm for the very first time!!! He and I both think the repetitive movement of the arm has given his brain the signal that it's there and ready to move!!!"

He will continue with both the FitMi and his other therapies for as long as it takes to fully recover!!!"

We love this story because it proves the power of neuroplasticity and repetition.

By practicing physical therapy exercises over and over with FitMi, Lisa's husband was able to improve his mobility after paralysis.

Whether you struggle with post-stroke paralysis or a less severe form of weakness on your affected side, FitMi can help you recover.

If you're ready to improve your wellbeing, click the link below to learn more about FitMi:

<https://www.flintrehab.com/product/fitmi/>

A photograph showing the FitMi Full-Body Therapy setup. It includes a laptop displaying a program interface with 'Reach to Target #1' and instructions, a blue circular device, and a yellow circular device. The setup is on a white surface.

FITMI FULL-BODY THERAPY
\$299

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