

# Stroke Recovery Prognosis Part 6: How to Speed Up Recovery

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Alright, now we're in the final part 6 of our stroke recovery prognosis series: How to speed up your recovery. Now, how does a speedy recovery fit into your stroke recovery prognosis?

## Your Stroke Recovery Prognosis and Speed

Generally, the prognosis for a mild stroke is better than one for a massive stroke. However, there are tons of success stories of survivors of massive stroke who recovered way more function than doctors thought possible.

**What makes these people different from the rest? And how can you recovery quickly, too?**

Keep reading, because we're about to tell you exactly how you can speed your recovery along. It will empower you to change your stroke recovery prognosis for the better. Now, let's dig into the techniques.

## 1. Always Focus on Repetitive Practice

Recovery is all about rewiring your brain by activating neuroplasticity. And the best way to activate neuroplasticity is through repetition. Each time you repeat a task or movement, you start to strengthen the new connections in your brain that controls that task/movement. The more you repeat, the stronger your brain gets and the stronger YOU get, too.

More repetition = more success.

## 2. Also Focus on Mental Practice

Aside from physical practice, you can also activate neuroplasticity by visualizing yourself performing those tasks or movements. This is called **mental practice**, and it's scientifically proven to help boost movement improvement after stroke. Even though you aren't moving your physical body, you can still activate neuroplasticity by mentally rehearsing those physical movements.

**This is an excellent tactic for people with stroke paralysis to use**, as it can help introduce movement into the body through dedicated and persistence practice.

## 3. Question Your Compensation Techniques

Understanding the difference between compensation and recovery can make the difference between a partial and **full recovery**. **Compensation techniques involve “performing an old movement in a new manner.”** For example, if stroke affected your dominant hand, then a compensation technique would be picking up utensils with your non-dominant hand.

**Recovery, on the other hand, involves “restoring the ability to perform a movement in the same manner as it was performed before injury.”** This involves working very hard to one day pick up utensils with your dominant hand again.

Initially, you may start using compensation techniques because you **HAVE** to. But once you recover enough to go without the compensation technique, you might not realize it because you don't try. Your compensation techniques have become habits. And if you don't question your habits, you'll be stuck with them forever.

Therefore, a great way to keep improving your recovery is by constantly questioning your compensation techniques. Constantly ask yourself, “Can I try doing this the hard way today? Have I improved enough to try this now?”

**Stroke survivors who achieve rapid recoveries are constantly questioning their compensation techniques and making themselves uncomfortable by *pursuing recovery over compensation as much as possible.***

## 4. Switching Things Up to Stimulate Your Brain

In part 4 we discussed the plateau, and that it's always possible to bust through it.

A great way to achieve this is by constantly switching up your therapy routine because your brain is stimulated the most by something new. This doesn't mean that you have to constantly be looking for new forms of therapy. Rather, finding rehab tools that incorporate lots of variety are a great solution.

**Focus on variety to keep your brain stimulated with something new so that you never slow down your recovery.**

## 5. NEVER Fall for the Nocebo Effect

The nocebo effect is the opposite of the placebo effect. So let's explain that one first. The placebo effect is when something positive becomes true because you simply believe it's true.

For example, if someone gave you a sugar pill to treat your headache – but you didn't know it was a sugar pill, you just think it's medicine – and your headache goes away, then you just benefitted from the placebo effect. You believed that it would help, so it did. The mind is VERY powerful this way.

**The nocebo effect, on the other hand, occurs when something negative becomes true because you believe it's true.** A common example of this – that is very unfortunate and makes us mad – is when a doctor tells a patient that she'll never be able to walk again. Because the patient believes this to be true, she may not pursue recovery nearly as much as she would have if she believe that she COULD walk again.

Your beliefs are very powerful, especially during times of recovery. Cast all limiting beliefs aside and believe in yourself. Believe in your potential to achieve a full recovery. And that's a wrap for our stroke recovery prognosis series. You now understand how to: assess your stroke recovery prognosis using the NIH Stroke Scale; treat the physical, cognitive, and emotional side effects of stroke; roughly estimate how long your recovery will take; and speed your recovery along to hopefully beat that estimate.

## And That's Everything!

We hope this article was useful to you on your road to recovery.