

What You Need to Know about Stroke Rehab

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There's a lot of information on stroke recovery to sort through, so we boiled it all down into 5 simple points. While there are many other important factors, these are some of the most important ones. Here's what you need to know about stroke rehab:

It's About Your Brain, Not Your Muscles

Movement impairment after stroke is a common side effect that can be restored through a diligent rehab exercise regimen. While it's easy to think that it's your muscles that need to be repaired, it's actually your brain that needs to be rewired since a stroke impairs your brain's ability to communicate with your muscles.

To restore this communication, you need to utilize a **high number of repetitions** during your rehab exercises. This allows your brain to rewire the motor functions from the damaged part of the brain over to new, healthy parts of the brain. This phenomenon is called **neuroplasticity** and it's your brain's way of changing, adapting, and healing itself after stroke.

Saying No to the Nocebo Effect

Doctors, therapists, and physiatrists can only tell you how much you'll be able to recover from an objective and medical standpoint. So without a healthy dose of optimism, you'll end up suffering from the nocebo effect when you hear about the limitations of your recovery.

What's the nocebo effect, you ask? The nocebo effect occurs when you're told about negative or limiting side effects, and because you believe in them, they turn into reality. So forget the limitations bestowed on you and **choose to believe that you can achieve a full recovery**. It'll get you much farther than believing that you can't.

Related article: How to Fully Recover from Stroke dated 9/28/2015. It's worth a read.

What You Eat Matters

Nutrition is an important part of stroke prevention and even more important for recovery. Here's what you need to know about nutrition for stroke recovery:

- Probiotics have the power to heal your gut and your brain. If this is a surprise to you, the gut-brain axis is something you should read up on.
- A low-sodium diet is important to counteract hypertension, one of the leading causes of stroke.
- Vitamins can help supplement a healthy diet to maximize recovery.
- Specifically, the B vitamins are extremely important for **stroke recovery**.
- Here's a guide on **what to eat after stroke**. It covers the basics like ditching processed foods and increasing your intake of nutrient-dense, plant-based foods.

Sleeping A LOT Is Perfectly Normal and Necessary

Many stroke survivors become startled and confused by how often and how much they want to sleep. Rest assured (literally) that it's perfectly normal. Sleep gives your brain time to rest and heal itself – it has a lot of work to do. So when you sleep A LOT, you're doing your body and your brain a favor. For more information, see our related article on **why you need lots of sleep after stroke** dated 9/2/2015.

Meditation Is Way Too Underrated

Meditation has proven and powerful benefits for healing the mind after stroke. Meditation helps reduce mental fatigue, depression, and anxiety. These benefits can trickle into every part of your stroke recovery process – giving you more energy to complete your rehab exercises, socialize with friends and family, and pursue a full recovery. Your mentality is everything, and a consistent meditation practice can help create a solid foundation for your entire stroke recovery process.