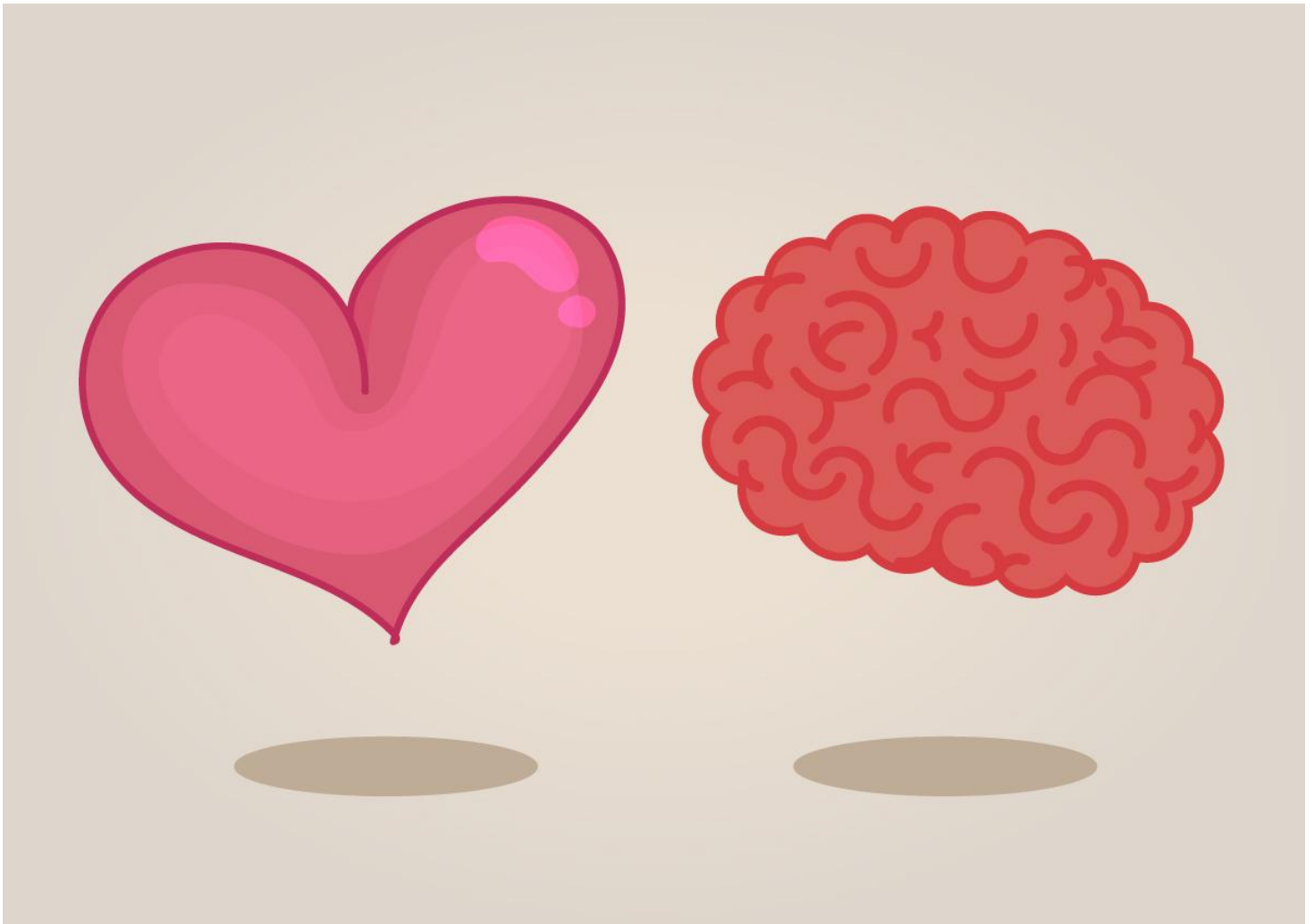


# Stroke Recovery as a Love Story – The Science of Healing and Happiness

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**To heal your brain after stroke, you need to approach it from the head *and* the heart.**

You have to learn the science behind how your brain actually heals and how your unhappiness is hindering your recovery. We'll cover the brainy stuff first and dig into the feel-good stuff at the end.

## Start with the Head

To get your life back after stroke, you need to regain lost skills, which is possible through the phenomenon of neuroplasticity. Neuroplasticity works when you train your brain to become better at a certain skill. During stroke recovery, you'll technically be working on 'old skills,' but the brain is relearning them like new again.

To make neuroplasticity work, you need to get your affected muscles moving, and you need to get them moving in a repetitious manner. When you repeat a movement over and over, it strengthens the new connections in your brain. As those connections get stronger and stronger, you continue to get better and better.

We recommend using neuroplasticity in two ways: *to heal the brain and boost happiness.*

## Move to the Heart

Stroke recovery can take a serious toll on your happiness, and that can set back your progress. *You need to foster a place of love and happiness within yourself first, and then all your efforts will flourish.*

The most common struggles impeding happiness during stroke recovery are **anger, frustration, and depression**. All of these emotions are heavily influenced by negative self-talk. And if you can untrain that negative self-talk, then you can absolutely, undoubtedly propel your recovery into greatness.

You will be able to **achieve a full recovery** because you simply *think you can*. This concept is very critical to your success because you need to understand exactly how your thoughts are influencing your recovery. Because if you feel like you've plateaued, **you haven't**. And the only thing standing in the way of a higher recovery is you and *your current thoughts*.

And we're going to show you how to retrain those thoughts to set you up for success.

## Boost Your Recovery with Mindfulness – Backed by Science

The tips you're about to read may not seem like a big deal. They may not seem like the missing piece of the stroke recovery puzzle – but they are. And they're backed by science. So try to keep an open mind as we explain how mindfulness can positively impact your recovery, starting with this short example.

Consider for a moment which of these situations would make you happiest:

- Doing your hand exercises while becoming absorbed by your hand exercises
- Doing your hand exercises while thinking about traveling in Paris
- Traveling in Paris while thinking about your hand exercises
- Traveling in Paris while becoming absorbed by the beauty around you

Believe it or not, science actually says that situation #1 and #4 lead to the most happiness. Yes. It's a **scientific fact** that we're happiest when thought and action are aligned. Unfortunately, we spend about half our time thinking about things completely unrelated to what we're doing, and it's draining our happiness. *The moral of the story: Whatever you're doing, be all there.*

Presence is key, and here's how to make it work for you:

## What Does This Mean For Stroke Recovery?

During stroke recovery, it's hard to be present. You're in a very difficult place and **you just want out**. It's likely that your thoughts are absorbed in the past or the future. You could be reminiscing on how great life was before your stroke, or you could be yearning for the future when you're finally recovered.

Both of these thoughts are not rooted in what you're doing. They're rooted somewhere else. And that's exactly what leads to unhappiness and failure. But sometimes it's not your intention to have a wandering mind. Sometimes wandering minds are the result of years of mental training.

Since a very young age, it's likely that you allowed your mind to wander. You've been doing this repeatedly for years – and it's trained your brain to, well, wander. Because that's how neuroplasticity works. Luckily you can use neuroplasticity and repetition to untrain your mind from wandering – and you can get there through *meditation*.

## Meditate for a Higher Recovery – Backed By Science

And now we have to tell you the thing you hate hearing: *Meditation is the best thing for stroke recovery*. You hate hearing it because it's such a simple solution and therefore couldn't possibly have a meaningful impact on your recovery – not when you've been putting in all this hard, grueling work.

How could something so *simple* be the thing that makes or breaks your recovery? We hear you. But the science makes a pretty strong argument on this one. Meditation is proven to help:

- Reduce depression, tiredness, and fatigue
- **Grow the grey matter of your brain**
- Improve balance, attention, and emotion regulation

It's quite a list, isn't it? And you can experience all those benefits – and increased happiness – by starting a daily meditation habit.

## Your New Habit

Starting a daily meditation habit can be tough even though the practice itself seems easy. So if you want the habit to stick, follow these steps.

### How to do it:

Every day, meditate for just 30 seconds. Yup, 30 seconds and that's it. If you want to go longer, then please do. But make 30 seconds your minimum. Everything else is extra.

### How to make it a habit:

All habits need cues, so link your meditation to a specific daily event, like going to bed or waking up. This way, the event will trigger the habit and you'll be much more likely to stick to it.

### Why you should do it:

Meditation, when done properly, can train your brain to focus more on the present moment, and this will help increase your happiness during a time where you need it most. If a wandering, anxious mind was draining your happiness before, then this will be *the best thing that ever happened to you*. Seriously.