

Compensation Techniques – The Hero or Villain of Stroke Recovery?

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We talk about compensation techniques a lot on the blog, mostly in regard to [achieving a full recovery](#). And today, we'd like to dive deeper into the topic.

Why do compensation techniques make such a big difference in the extent of your recovery? And how can you achieve a higher recovery? Let's explore.

What are Compensation Techniques?

Compensation techniques are the adaptive shortcuts used to work around stroke side effects. They're useful because they help you move around *safely* while saving time, energy, and frustration.

For example, if you can't cook or hold a book open, you can use compensation techniques to work around the impaired motor skills. This could include [cooking with one hand](#) or reading on a Kindle.

They accomplish the same goal, just through different means.

Speed Up Recovery by Slowing Down

Compensation techniques are good when you can't live without them.

In the example above, if cooking with two hands is impossible, then you *need* compensation techniques because you *need* to eat.

In the same way, if you *can* cook with two hands, then you should – even if it's slow and frustrating – because it stimulates the part of your brain responsible for controlling those muscles. **The more you stimulate your brain this way, the faster you will regain control of the affected muscles.**

Avoiding the use of your affected muscles will result in a slower recovery because your brain has less stimulation.

To work past the need for compensation, you can choose to do things the hard way – and that means there's a lot of work to do. You will need to [make peace with a slow pace](#) and constantly make the decision to be diligent.

It's a tall order, but it's worth it for the sake of a faster, fuller recovery.

(More on that later.)

Curiosity Is the Cure

To properly work past compensation techniques, you must constantly question your methods.

Every day or week, ask yourself, "What am I doing differently than before, and how can I get back to doing things like before?"

Your answers don't always have to be straightforward.

Maybe you don't go straight from reading on a Kindle to reading a book. Maybe you read on a Kindle most the time, and turn pages of a book as a form of rehab exercise.

This way, you're making progress towards working past the compensation technique while avoiding the frustration associated with the sluggish pace of doing something you enjoy.

As long as the curiosity is there, you'll learn to recognize when it's time to keep things the same, and when it's time to challenge yourself.

Your Best, Fullest Recovery

Compensation techniques make the difference between a limited and a full recovery.

Curious individuals who challenge their affected muscles will give their brains the stimulation it needs to heal fast and effectively.

Questioning your compensation techniques is a matter of *harnessing your fullest potential*.

So ask yourself, "Do I have the potential to ditch this compensation technique?"

And if not, ask, "Do I have the potential to get there in the future?"

No matter how hard your brain tries to argue, always answer with yes.

It will get you so much farther than setting for no.

Disclaimer – Love Them All!

Now, we're not here to demonize compensation techniques.

They're absolutely necessary, and should only be ditched when appropriate. If you need to use a walker, then please don't try to walk without it for the sake of a faster recovery.

Be just as patient as you are curious.

And everything will fall into place.