

# How to Conquer the Activities of Daily Living to Regain Independence during Stroke Recovery

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When deciding to go home after the hospital following stroke, it's important to determine your level of independence with the activities of daily living.

## What Are the Activities of Daily Living?

The activities of daily living (ADL's) are:

- Eating
- Bathing
- Dressing
- Toileting
- Transferring
- Continence

The ADL's are the basics of self-care.

# How Can You Regain the Ability to Perform ADL's?

Regaining the ability to perform the activities of daily living is synonymous with regaining your independence. And in order to regain independence, you're going to need a solid **rehab exercise routine** with plenty of strategy. The rest of this article will delve into your strategy.

First, we will discuss the benefits of task-specific training. Then we will briefly discuss motivation – because *knowing* how to do something is different from actually getting yourself to *do* something.

## Is Task-Specific Training Helping or Hindering Your Recovery?

Task-specific training simply involves doing the task that you want to do. So if you want to walk, then task-specific training will involve walking.

*Here's our problem with that...*

Task-specific training requires a **high level of confidence** and preexisting skill – two things that many survivors unfortunately lack during their first few months of stroke recovery. (And it's completely understandable!)

So what can you do if task-specific training isn't an option? You practice rehab exercises that will give you the strength and coordination that *translates* to the tasks you want to do. That's the premise behind most rehab devices and **different types of therapy**. They utilize movements that are directly transferrable to the task you want to perform – but without involving that task.

## An Example of Getting Back to the Activities of Daily Living

To independently perform the ADL's, you need good hand function, and task-specific training won't help if you don't have preexisting hand function. To illustrate this issue, let's use an example of getting back to your favorite hobby: knitting. (Everyone loves knitting, right?)

Without preexisting hand function, you can't become good at knitting by simply attempting to knit – because you can't even get started. Instead, you could use a hand therapy device that helps you regain hand function that translates to your budding ability to knit.

This is the premise behind our **MusicGlove** hand therapy device. You don't put the device on and instantly become a great knitter. Instead, you practice 5 gripping movements – and you *only* focus on those 5 movements. *But you'll get really good at them* and they'll translate directly into your everyday activities.

That's why our users are able to resume the activities of daily living that involve their hands (like buttoning a shirt and eating) because your motor improvements transfer over to the things you want to be doing.

So, should you do task-specific training or **demanding repetition** training? That's up to you (and your therapist) to decide.

# How Can You Maximize Your Motor Improvement?

Now let's briefly talk about motivation and results.

In order to see amazing results during stroke rehabilitation, you need to be extremely consistent with your rehabilitation regimen (and you need to be utilizing tons of **repetitive practice**). So the key question is, how can you get yourself to be consistent? Our answer: By making it matter to you. And it all starts with *why*.

If you really want to **get your hand back**, take some time to think about why you actually want this. Because it can be difficult to get excited about doing ten sets of exercises each morning. But ask yourself, why are you doing these exercises in the first place?

Do you need it to regain your independence? Do you need it to socialize normally with your friends again? Do you need it to get back to your favorite hobby?

Discover the thing you really want – the **intrinsic piece of *happiness*** that you're seeking – and tie all your stroke recovery efforts back to that.

Keep your eye on the prize, take it one day at a time, and you can regain your independence.