

What Happens to the Brain after a Stroke?

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Most online resources make a big, complicated mess out of explaining what happens to the brain after a stroke.

To help simplify things, we've created this brief overview that will help explain what's going on and how to start healing.

Defining the Term "Brain Attack"

A stroke is a 'brain attack' that cuts off the supply of blood to certain parts of the brain. This kills the brain cells in that specific area of the brain, creating a sort of 'hole.' Since different parts of the brain control different functions, a stroke affects the functions that once existed in that hole.

If you had a left-brained stroke, it could affect your language (a left-brained task) but leave your creative skills (a right-brained skill) completely intact.

Only the tasks that once existed in that hole are impaired.

Making New Connections

The bad news is that the brain cannot revive these lost brain cells; the hole will unfortunately be there forever.

The *good* news, however, is that the brain can still heal and regain lost functions through the process of **neuroplasticity**. During neuroplasticity, the brain cells that surround the hole can pick up the slack and take on lost responsibilities.

To do this, the surrounding brain cells form new connections with each other so that they can communicate properly again. This is how people who have large sections of their brain removed can still live a normal life.

Practice Is the Remedy

The best way to speed up the healing process of neuroplasticity is to give the brain constant stimulation with the tasks you want to relearn. This lets the brain know that you want to get better, and the surrounding neurons will work harder to get you there.

For example, if you want to get your hand back, you need to perform hand exercises over and over. Each time you practice, the new connections in your brain responsible for hand movement become stronger. If you don't give the brain stimulation consistently enough, the connections quickly weaken.

That's why consistent rehab exercise is critical after stroke.

More Simple Resources

Easy-to-understand resources on stroke recovery are hard to come by, so we've been hard at work creating them!

Check out these other articles that cover essential stroke recovery information.

- [How to Recover from Stroke: An Unconventional Step by Step Guide](#) 9/21/15
- [What You Need to Know About a Full Recovery after Stroke](#) 7/5/2016
- [28 Stroke Recovery Tips for Healing, Habits, and Happiness](#) 4/13/16