

The Best Speech Therapy Exercises for Stroke Patients

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The best speech therapy exercises all revolve around one thing... In this article, you'll learn what that thing is, and you'll also learn:

- How speech therapy exercises help with aphasia
- What some great beginner exercises are
- Why you should try using speech therapy apps
- When to work with a speech-language pathologist
- *How to get started if you can't talk at all*

There's a lot of good stuff in here, so let's dig in.

The Best Speech Therapy Exercises

If you're looking for speech therapy exercises, then it's likely that you have **aphasia**. Aphasia is a post-stroke condition that often happens when a **left-brain stroke** damages the language center of the brain and causes language/communication difficulties. Speech exercises are a great way to improve aphasia, and we'll get straight to the point about them:

The best speech therapy exercises revolve around *repetition*.

Repetition helps activate neuroplasticity, the method that your brain uses to rewire and restructure itself. If stroke has damaged the language center of your brain, then neuroplasticity can help the healthy, surrounding areas of the brain “pick up the slack.”

With repetition, you can retrain new areas of the brain to control your speech. The more you train, the better your speech will get. Practicing speech therapy exercises is a *must* for improving speech after stroke.

Which Problem Areas Do You Need Covered?

If you're trying to improve your speech after stroke, it's important to identify which areas of speech you need to work on. Surprisingly, there are many functions that go into speech, like:

- *Speaking
- Listening
- Reading
- Writing
- Comprehension
- Attention
- Memory
- Visual processing
- Problem solving

*The following speech therapy exercises mostly focus on your speaking ability. They don't focus on much else. For that reason, we will later discuss plenty of other speech therapy options to expand your skills. Let's start with some speech exercises:

Speech Therapy Exercises

The following speech therapy exercises are really simple. However, simple can still be effective – especially if you practice them with solid repetition and consistency. If you do each exercise 20+ times, 6 days a week, then you should see results soon. Here are the exercises:

Tongue Movements



There are 3 tongue movements that you should practice:

Tongue In-and-Outs: Stick your tongue out and hold it for 2 seconds, then pull it back in. Hold for 2 seconds, and repeat.

Tongue Side-to-Side: Open your mouth and move your tongue to touch the right corner of your mouth. Hold for 2 seconds, then touch the left corner of your mouth. Hold for 2 seconds, and repeat.

Tongue Up-and-Down: Open your mouth and stick your tongue out. Then, reach your tongue up toward your nose. Hold for 2 seconds, then reach your tongue down toward your chin. Hold for 2 seconds, and repeat.

It's best to do all of these exercises in front of the mirror so that you can get proper visual feedback.

Sound Practice

Once you have exercised your tongue, you can start to practice making sounds. We will focus on sounds that you have difficulty with, because those need the most practice.

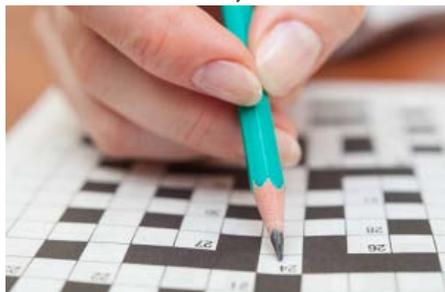
Take a consonant that you have trouble saying, and then pair it with each of the 5 vowels (a, e, i, o, u). **For example, if you have trouble with the “r” sound, then practice saying “ra, re, ri, ro, ru” over and over.** If you really struggle with each sound, then you can try saying each one individually over and over. For example, start by saying “ra” 20 times. Then move onto “re” 20 times; etc. Repeat this for all sounds that you have difficulty with.

Exercises with Speech Therapy Apps



While the exercises above are a great place to start, they aren't tailored to your unique problem areas. If you suffer from **aphasia after stroke**, then it's a great idea to try using speech therapy apps like **Constant Therapy**. Speech therapy apps will assess your current ability levels and assign exercises that target your problem areas. The interaction with the app makes it more engaging, too, so that you are motivated to get your reps in!

Other Free, Creative Speech Therapy Exercises to Try



If you're looking for other free exercises to try, here are a few that we recommend: To work on your visual processing and comprehension, try computer games like **solitaire** or **alchemy**. To exercise your problem solving and visual processing, try word games like **word searches** or **crossword puzzles**. To exercise your comprehension, try puzzle games like **Sudoku**. Most brain games will help improve speech when you practice them regularly.

Should You Work with a Speech-Language Pathologist?

If you really struggle with speech after stroke, then you might want to consider working with a speech-language pathologist (SLP). An SLP is trained to help you recover speech after neurological injury like stroke, and they work with *all* areas of speech recovery that we listed earlier.

Most people work with an SLP for as long as insurance will cover, and then move onto speech apps when insurance cuts them off.

What If You Can't Speak At All?

Sometimes massive stroke completely impairs your ability to talk at all. This can make it difficult to get started with speech therapy. But there is hope!

Surprisingly, even if someone can't speak their words, they can usually sing their words. This is because speech is a left-brain function but singing is a creative right-brain function.



Many stroke survivors who could not speak at all have successfully used singing therapy to recover their speech after stroke. If you have difficulty getting started with the advice in this article, then you might want to consider starting with singing therapy.

Summary: The Best Speech Therapy Exercises

Overall, the best speech therapy exercises are the ones you practice repetitively and consistently. That's how the brain recovers.

However, because many different skills go into speech, it's important to cover all your bases by working with an SLP or using speech therapy apps.

And if you have trouble getting started because you can't talk at all, then singing therapy is a great option to look into.