

# Motivation during Stroke Recovery – How to Reprogram Your Mind for Growth

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Finding motivation during recovery is all about developing a growth mindset.

Have you ever wondered how some survivors end up recovering far more movement than their doctors expected? Hard work plays a heavy role, but how did they muster the motivation to get going and keep going? Survivors like the ones we just mentioned all have one thing in common: a growth mindset. And we're going to show you how to develop this mindset so that you can achieve your highest recovery.

## Why You Feel Stuck – It's All About Mindset

The crux of this article will revolve around 2 types of mindsets: fixed and growth.

If you feel stuck during your recovery it could be for one of many reasons, but most likely it's because:

- You've mistakenly confused the plateau with the end of recovery
- Your emotions are getting in the way
- You have a fixed mindset

All of these things can be **remedied**, and today we're going to focus on how to overcome a fixed mindset – if you have one. You may read through this article and learn that you already have a growth mindset. If so, then learn how to fully harness it so that you can exploit your full potential (i.e. a **full recovery**).

## Fixed vs Growth Mindset

First, let's distinguish between a fixed and growth mindset.

Someone with a fixed mindset tends to let their limiting beliefs obstruct their development. They see where they want to improve but avoid addressing the issue because they don't believe that practice makes perfect. If they fail at something, they feel ashamed or blame others.

On the other hand, a growth mindset means that you believe in your potential. You're always looking for ways to learn and grow so that you can overcome your weaknesses (and sometimes even turn them into strengths). Those with a growth mindset welcome obstacles and see them as challenges and opportunity. They willingly put effort into bettering themselves and the world around them. A growth mindset is something that anyone can develop; it just requires some serious time, effort, and awareness.

It's also important to note that you don't have to eliminate a fixed mindset altogether. As long as you can adopt a growth perspective in certain situations – say, your **stroke recovery** – then it's already enough to initiate serious change.

## How to Develop a Growth Mindset

Developing a growth mindset starts with 3 steps:

- Making peace with discomfort
- Acknowledging any limiting beliefs you have about yourself
- Becoming aware of limiting thoughts

As they say, you need to get comfortable with being uncomfortable if you want to make serious change. And developing a growth mindset starts with getting nice and uncomfortable. Then you need to dig deep.

Do some serious personal reflection and identify any limiting beliefs you might have about yourself. These are the fixed beliefs that we're trying to reprogram. For example, do you feel like you'll:

- Never be able to **use your hand again**?
- Live in a wheelchair your whole life?
- Never **achieve a full recovery**?

These are the thoughts of someone with a fixed mindset, and you can see how it sells you short.

To eradicate these beliefs, you need to start becoming aware of them first. Once you master that, you can start to take some serious action.

## Overcoming a Fixed Mindset with Awareness

If you have negative beliefs, chances are you're feeding those beliefs with your thoughts, and a fixed mindset thrives on negative thoughts. For example, let's say you spilled some cereal on the floor. Your first thought might be, "I'm so uncoordinated! Why do I always do this!" You might not even be aware that you're thinking these things when they happen because it happens subconsciously.

This is where the change needs to be made. Start paying attention to when you talk down to yourself. Do you get fed up with your **rehab exercises** to the point of frustration or anger? If so, there might be negative self-talk going on. And the first step is simply bringing awareness into it. Then you can reprogram your mind to feed you positive thoughts that will foster a growth mindset.

And reprogramming, as you know, is made possible by your good ol' friend **neuroplasticity**.

## The Neuroplastic Switch-a-Roo

You're already familiar with how neuroplasticity helps you **regain lost motor skills** after stroke. But you can use it for so much more than that – including reprogramming your mindset. You can train yourself to replace negative thoughts with positive ones. It just takes awareness, practice, and repetition. It's just like developing a habit, and you're already an expert at it. You've been developing and reinforcing this mindset since you were a child. So it'll take some serious work to override it. But it's absolutely possible.

You've already trained your thoughts to be one way, and now you can consciously train them to be a different way – a way that builds you up instead of down. **Start by becoming aware of any negative self-talk, and whenever you feel yourself thinking self-deprecating thoughts, replace them with positive ones.**

Maybe the next time you can't complete your rehab exercises, you consciously say to yourself, "It's okay. Tomorrow is a new day and I have plenty of time and opportunity to improve." It sounds cheesy, but don't worry – it won't stay this way. We need to start by consciously changing our thought patterns in a very obvious fashion. Then we need to consciously make this switch over and over until it sticks. And it will stick with enough practice and repetition – **that's how neuroplasticity works.**

Then once the positive switch-a-roo becomes a habit, your brain will adapt to this new thought patterns and your *subconscious* thoughts will become positive and encouraging ones. And **positive thoughts** fuel a growth mindset.

## Creating Permanent, Lasting Motivation

At the beginning of this article you identified your limiting beliefs.

Once you've finally untrained those limiting beliefs using the neuroplastic switch-a-roo, then you can start identifying how you can grow.

What are your weaknesses and how can you fix them?

Do you know what **all your options** are? If not, start doing research. Are you taking appropriate steps toward **stroke prevention**? If not, do some more research.

Are you pouring knowledge into your head at a breathtaking rate? We have hundreds of articles on stroke recovery so you can do just that.

No matter what obstacle you're facing, you can overcome it with a growth mindset.

**The key is to look at everything as an opportunity to grow; to retrain your brain to think positive thoughts and believe in your potential; to use your newly found gusto to research like crazy and put the effort you deserve into your recovery.**

That's how you develop a growth mindset. And *that's* how you develop lasting motivation.