

Which Helps You Improve Movement After Stroke Faster: Repetition or Consistency?

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Are you trying to improve movement after stroke? *Want to see results as fast as possible?* Here's the formula:

Repetition + Consistency = Recovery

But which is more important: repetition or consistency? Which should you prioritize? These are great questions that we'll answer in today's article.

The Confusing Question

Someone recently called in and asked us the following question:

"I have your FitMi and I use it for an hour a day. But I only exercise one muscle group for that hour, because more repetition is better right? Or should I be exercising all the muscle groups in that hour? But wouldn't that be less effective because it's less repetition per muscle group?"

She brought up an excellent point. Which is better: more repetition or more consistency?

Our Answer

First off, she was right to think that more repetition is better. When you perform a movement with high repetition, it activates neuroplasticity, which helps your brain rewire itself. Even if you can't do the exercise perfectly, repetitive practice can help you get better *when you try your best each time*. So yes, repetition matters... a lot.

But should you go all-out and exercise a single muscle group for an hour once a week? Well, no...

Strengthening Your Neural Connections

While repetition helps create new neural connections in your brain, consistency reinforces and *strengthens* those connections. When you fail to reinforce new neural connections with consistent practice, you won't see the fastest results possible. And in extreme cases – like giving up rehabilitation altogether – you can actually regress backwards.

This does not mean that exercising a muscle group once a week will produce poor results – it just won't work as fast. Your brain likes to be as efficient as possible. If you aren't using the new connections you're forming, you'll lose them. That's where the saying "*use it or lose it*" comes from.

Use It or Lose It

So if you only exercise your arm once a week – even if it's for a full hour – those connections will start to weaken during the 6 days in between exercise sessions. (Unless you're getting a lot of informal arm therapy in between sessions.) The connections weaken because your brain doesn't feel like it's a priority since you only move your arm weekly vs. daily.

But if you practice arm exercises daily – even if it's for just 10 minutes – then those neural connections will get constant reinforcement. This will tell your brain that arm movement is important, and your brain will become more and more efficient at moving your arm. Consistency matters a lot, too.

The Verdict

So our answer is that *both* repetition and consistency matter. Repetition helps create new neural connections and consistency helps strengthen those connections. The more repetition you perform, the more you will activate neuroplasticity.

But don't sacrifice consistency for more repetition! **This is super important.** You are better off exercising a muscle group for 10 minutes daily than for 1 hour once a week. And if you can get multiple exercise sessions in per day, even if they're short, then you will see the best results possible.