

Stroke Recovery Prognosis Part 5: How Long Will Recovery Take?

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Welcome to part 5 of our stroke recovery prognosis series: How to estimate the length of your stroke recovery. For many, this part 5 is where all the juicy stuff is because the question of the century is...

How long will my recovery take, goshdangit?!

This widely asked question is rarely given a straight answer because every stroke is different and therefore every recovery will be different.

HOWEVER, we like to take more liberties on this blog by providing you with essential information that can help you get a better understanding of how long recovery takes – in a *very general*, rough estimate kind of way.

A General Outline of How Long Stroke Recovery Takes

Although every stroke recovery is different, there are some general patterns that you should be aware of. They can help give you a rough estimate of how long your recovery will take. Then we will discuss factors that can slow down your recovery and how to speed up your recovery.

1 Month Post-Stroke

Studies have shown that recovery is the fastest in the first few weeks after stroke. The brain is rapidly trying to heal itself from the damage, which is why patients typically start rehab *as soon as possible*.

3 Months Post-Stroke

Rapid healing will continue to occur throughout the first 3 months of recovery. Your brain is in a heightened state of plasticity, which means that it's rewiring and healing itself even faster than normal.

4 Months Post-Stroke

Once you're past the 3 month mark, your rate of recovery typically starts to slow down. This is known as the "plateau effect," which is VERY misleading, and we urge you to read the following statement carefully:

Experiencing a plateau does not mean that you've maxed out your recovery. Recovery will only stop when you stop. As long as you continue to push yourself and add some variety to your regimen to keep your brain stimulated, then you WILL continue to improve.

Do not be a victim of the nocebo effect, where you stop pursuing recovery because someone told you that you've reached the end. It's simply not true, and there is ALWAYS potential to improve, no matter what anyone says.

6 Months Post-Stroke

If you had a mild stroke, then you may experience significant improvement by the 6 month mark. You might even be close to the finish line. If you had a massive stroke, then you will still continue to see good improvement. Sometimes the plateau effect doesn't settle in until the 6 month mark.

1 Year Post-Stroke

After a year into recovery, patterns among everyone really start to fade.

Whether you had a small or major stroke, you could either have reached a full recovery or partial recovery at this point. The amount of recovery that you experience at this point really depends upon the tactics that you implement, which we will discuss soon!

15 Years Post-Stroke

Some people have achieved a full recovery at this point (and we will discuss how this is possible later). Others may still be working to recover. And there's something very important that you need to know about this:

While the rate of change in the brain declines as we age, it never stops. We are capable of developing new neurons up until our last days.

This means that you are capable of healing at any stage post-stroke. It doesn't matter if you've taken a 15 year break. You can still recover if you start pursuing effective forms of rehabilitation.

Now that you understand what to *generally* expect for your rate of recovery, let's discuss how to speed things along in Part 6.