

# The Complete Guide to Treating Post Stroke Spasticity – for Good!

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Post stroke spasticity is the most common post stroke side effect, and it's likely that you've never heard the whole truth about it.

Most likely, you were told that there's something wrong with your muscles, and Botox can fix it. While this is *partially* true, it omits more effective and permanent solutions to spasticity. There is tons of hope for treating spasticity – even severe spasticity in paralyzed muscles.

Today, we're sharing the most valuable way to fix this frustrating problem.

## Spasticity as Brain-Muscle Miscommunication

Before, you've probably heard spasticity explained in relation to your muscles. Spasticity causes your muscles to become tightened, so it's natural to focus on your muscles as what needs to be fixed. But spasticity is actually caused by miscommunication between your brain and your muscles.

Normally your muscles are in constant communication with your brain about how much tension they're feeling, and the brain has to constantly monitor this tension to prevent tearing. Your brain continuously sends out messages telling your muscles when to contract and relax.

When a stroke damages part of the brain responsible for muscle control, this communication is thrown off. The damaged part of your brain no longer receives the messages that your muscles are trying to send, and as a result, your brain no longer tells them when to contract or relax. So, your muscles keep themselves in a constant state of contraction in order to protect themselves. That's the cause of spasticity from the muscular perspective.

However, there's a *second layer* to spasticity that no one talks about. Spasticity is also caused by miscommunication from your *spinal cord*.

## The OTHER Cause of Spasticity

While your muscles are always in communication with your brain, they're also in communication with your spinal cord. Usually the spinal cord takes the messages from your muscles and sends them up to the brain. But since the brain is no longer reading those messages, your affected muscles have no one to talk to. So the spinal cord takes over.

But the spinal cord doesn't know how to properly operate your muscles. It really only has one goal: **to prevent your muscles from tearing**. In order to do that, your spinal cord sends signals to keep your muscles in a constant state of contraction, which is what causes spasticity. Your spinal cord only has the best intentions – to prevent your muscles from tearing – but it's frustrating because now your muscles are **painfully stiff**.

Let's look at some temporary and permanent treatment options to fix this issue and alleviate your spasticity.

## How to Temporarily Treat Spasticity

There are temporary ways to treat spasticity, which includes locally administered or orally taken drugs. Locally administered drugs are injected into the affected muscles and help reduce pain, increase movement, and curb potential bone and joint problems.

Orally taken drugs offer the same benefits, but they are not site-specific and will affect all the muscles in your body. As with most drugs in Western society, they only treat the symptom, not the underlying cause. This means that drugs are only a short-term solution.

So how can you treat the underlying cause? With the help of your good ol' friend neuroplasticity.

## How to Permanently Reduce Spasticity

**Neuroplasticity** is your long-term, permanent solution to overcoming spasticity. When a stroke damages part of the brain responsible for motor function, it decreases the number of brain cells dedicated to moving your affected limbs. Neuroplasticity comes into play by rewiring your brain and dedicating more brain cells to controlling your affected limbs. In order for this rewiring to occur, you have to repeat **your rehab exercises** over and over. The more you repeat the movement, the better the spasticity will subside and movement will improve.

It's like paving new roads. The more you reinforce those new roads, the stronger they'll become. Putting in hard work is essential.

## 5 Ways to Activate Neuroplasticity and Treat Spasticity

If spasticity is causing you pain, then using temporary solutions in the meantime can help alleviate the barriers keeping you from your rehab exercises.

Since rehab exercise is the only permanent solution to spasticity, getting yourself to participate is crucial.

Here are 5 ways to maximize your benefit from rehab exercise and reduce spasticity:

- Rehabilitation exercise \*most important
- Electrical stimulation
- Constraint-induced movement therapy
- Robot-assisted rehab
- Brain stimulation

There's one thing these methods all have in common: *Repetition*. No matter which option you choose, be sure to create an at-home rehabilitation regimen that utilizes a high number of repetitions. You'll get better faster this way because it's the only way to retrain your brain to relax your spastic muscles – permanently.

## 3 Ways to Treat Spasticity When You Can't Move Your Muscles

Sometimes muscles become so stiff with spasticity that it feels like they're paralyzed. The following 3 methods can help reduce spasticity in paralyzed muscles:

- Passive exercise
- Mirror therapy
- Visualization

Practice these methods repetitively and you can regain movement in paralyzed muscles. *Yes, it's possible to regain movement in paralyzed muscles!* Then, once you've regained some movement, you can use any of the previous 5 methods to keep improving.

## Spasticity as a Surprising Sign of Recovery

And that's a wrap! You are now aware that spasticity is caused by miscommunication between your brain and your muscles... And this should bring you tons hope that your spasticity is treatable because it means that your muscles are still trying to communicate with your brain!

Your body hasn't given up, and neither should you. There are tons of success stories of stroke survivors who regained way more movement than doctors ever thought possible. Don't let someone else's limiting beliefs limit your recovery.

Even if you have no movement in your spastic muscles, keep trying by focusing on high repetition and taking small steps.

Eventually, your spasticity will start to improve – for good.