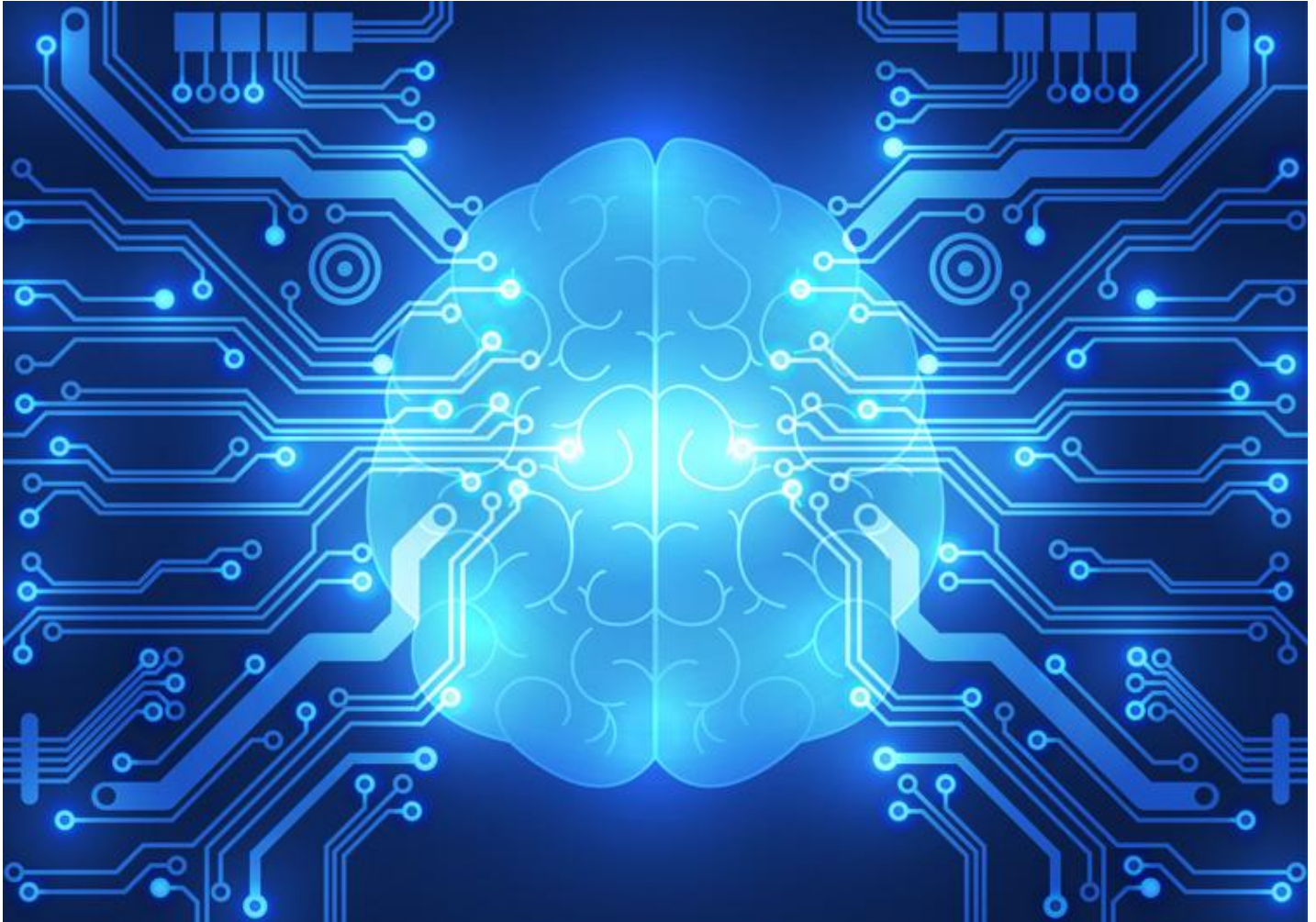


Neuroplasticity after Stroke

October 1, 2015



Neuroplasticity after stroke is the #1 thing that every stroke survivor should know about.

If you want to maximize your recovery, then understanding and applying the concept of neuroplasticity to your regimen will help you harness your brain's full healing potential. It's an inspiring phenomenon, so let's get started.

What Is Neuroplasticity?

The word *neuroplasticity* is the combination of 2 words: *neuron* and *plasticity*. Neurons are the nerve cells in your brain, and plasticity refers to something that is capable of being molded or reorganized. Therefore, neuroplasticity refers to the process of reorganizing the neurons in your brain. It's the mechanism that your brain uses to heal from damage and rewire itself.

Rewiring Your Brain after Stroke

After a stroke, certain parts of the brain can become damaged (depending on what type of stroke and where it occurred) and the functions that were once stored in those parts of the brain become impaired. For example, if the part of your brain responsible for motor control on the right side of your body becomes damaged, it will make it hard to move your right arm.

That's when neuroplasticity comes into play.

Neuroplasticity allows your brain to rewire functions that were once held in damaged areas of the brain over to new, healthy parts of the brain. So with our right arm example, a different, healthy area of your brain is capable of picking up the slack and taking on the task of moving your right arm.

There's one important requisite for neuroplasticity to occur, however, and it's *repetition*.

You need to utilize a high number of repetitions during your rehab exercises, otherwise it won't work that well.

How to Make Neuroplasticity Work for You

To rewire your brain after stroke, think of it as paving new roads. If you only put a little effort in, then the new pathways won't be that strong and they will fade with time. However, if you put a lot of effort in, you can pave a strong, durable road that will last for a long time.

The same goes with your **rehab exercises**. The more you practice and repeat an exercise over and over, the stronger those new pathways in your brain become.

Neuroplasticity is nothing without good reinforcement and diligence.

One Last Bit

To really maximize your brain's healing, you should be aware of all the other elements that go into stroke recovery.

This guide covers all the bases ("How to Recover from Stroke: A Step by Step Guide to Avoiding the Worst Mistakes" dated 9/21/2015), we hope you find it useful.