

Hand Rehabilitation: 5 Methods for Recovery

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What does hand rehabilitation mean to you?

To some, it simply means **getting movement back into your hand**. To others, it means getting your life back and doing the activities you love once again. No matter **what your goals are**, we want you to succeed in your hand rehabilitation efforts, so here are our top 5 picks for **hand therapy after stroke**.

1. Get Your Hand to Open

Stretching can help if you have trouble opening your hand after stroke. Start by spreading your affected hand out on a large, round object (like a basketball) and keep it stretched while you move the ball side to side. Your goal is to keep your hand in a relaxed, open position while getting it to move.

2. Reduce the Stiffness

If spasticity is holding you back, consult with your doctor or therapist about medications that can help relax the muscles. Injectable treatments such as Botox are a common treatment for spasticity. These treatments are only temporary though, as they're just treating the side effects.

To permanently defeat spasticity, that brain must relearn how to control those muscles, which is made possible through rehab exercises. In this way, temporarily treating spasticity with Botox can help make rehab exercises doable so that you can still working on the ultimate goal of getting your hand back permanently.

3. Add a Little Jolt

For an extra boost, consult with your therapist to see if you're a candidate for electrical stimulation. If you are, then **TENS therapy** can help stimulate the nerves and muscles in your hand and introduce movement in a highly effective manner.

When TENS therapy is combined with your normal hand rehabilitation regimen, it can boost your **neuroplastic efforts** and help you regain movement faster. More on TENS therapy in the article on 9/17/2016 "Benefits of TENS Therapy for Stroke Rehab".

4. Trick Your Brain

Mirror therapy is a highly effective method for improving hand movement and reducing pain. **Mirror therapy** involves the use of a mirror to reflect your unaffected hand in place of your affected hand. When you perform rehab exercises with your unaffected hand in this manner, it 'tricks' you brain into thinking that you're moving your affected hand, and as a result your hand function will improve.

5. Make It Fun!

If electrical stimulation isn't an option, then you can try non-assistive hand therapy devices like [MusicGlove](#), which utilizes repetitious movement to help **retrain your brain** how to use your hand again. While non-assistive devices get a bad rap because they don't immediately help you use your hand, they're much more rewarding in the long run because you'll regain the ability to use your hand on your own – without the need for a device.