

# How to Reduce Spasticity with Botox for Stroke Recovery

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If you suffer from spasticity after stroke, then Botox might be able to really help you out. BUT! Botox for stroke recovery isn't a one-and-done treatment.

Most people don't understand what exactly Botox does, which prevents them from actually improving over the long-term. To avoid wasting time and money, we'll show you how to make the most of your Botox treatments – starting with a brief overview of what spasticity is.

## The Problem with Spasticity

If you suffer from spasticity, it's important to understand that **the problem is not in your muscles**. Rather, the problem is in your brain-muscle communication.

When stroke damages your motor cortex, it impairs your brain's ability to send signals that make your muscles move. And when your muscles don't get any signals from your brain, they tense up in order to protect themselves.

While you could pry your spastic muscles open with a crowbar (which we do NOT recommend), it wouldn't do any good because your muscles will tighten right back up without signals from the brain telling them to relax.

**Therefore, once you *retrain your brain* to tell your muscles to relax, your spasticity will go away. This is the most important thing to understand.** It's all about retraining the brain.

## What Botox Is Good for

Botulinum toxin (Botox) helps relax your muscles without getting your brain on board. Botox is a "nerve block" that blocks the release of chemicals that signal your muscles to tighten. As a result, your muscles relax.

According to WebMD, it can take 2-4 weeks for Botox to improve muscle stiffness. We have heard many stroke survivors rave about the muscle-relaxing benefits of Botox.

But without getting your brain on board, Botox merely addresses the *symptom* of spasticity, not the real problem. This means that once the Botox wears away, the problem will come back. While this can be very beneficial in the short-term, you want to plan for the long-term, too.

## Why Botox Is Only a Temporary Treatment

Botox becomes a temporary treatment when you don't use it in conjunction with other therapies that help restore your brain-muscle communication (like rehab exercise).

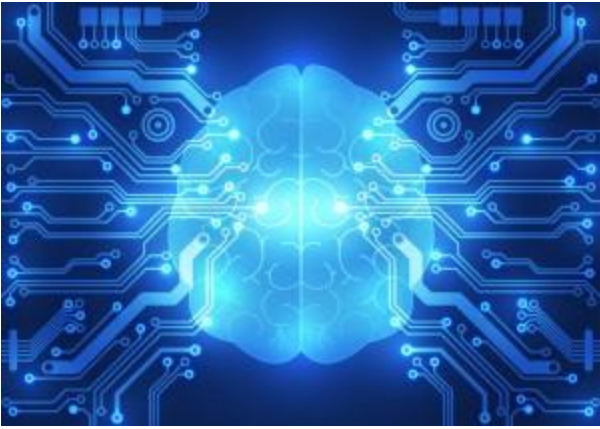
When you use Botox without any other supporting treatments, your improvements are merely temporary.

It's kind of like using pain killers for a broken ankle without actually doing anything for your ankle. The painkillers will make pain go away, but it's just a temporary treatment for the symptom. Your ankle is still broken, so once the pain killers fade, you'll need more.

That's why it's important to treat the real problem – not just the symptom.

## How to Get Lasting Results with Botox

In order to make spasticity go away for good, you need to relink your mind to your muscles by activating neuroplasticity and rewiring your brain.



Neuroplasticity will help your brain relearn how to communicate with your muscles. And once this communication is restored, your muscles will finally begin to relax because they'll be able to hear your brain's signals telling them to relax.

In order to activate neuroplasticity, you need to practice rehab exercises repetitively. Repetition is how you rewire your brain and form new connections.

However, sometimes spasticity is severe and makes any kind of movement impossible. In these cases, Botox can really help you out by creating a window of opportunity to practice exercises.

The best way to use Botox is in conjunction with a rehab exercise regimen that will rewire your brain. The Botox will loosen up your muscles so that you can move in the short-term, and the exercise will help relink your mind to your muscles so that you can keep moving in the long-term.

## Botox + Rehab Exercise = Lasting Results

[Ross Bogey](#), DO, says that Botox may indirectly help with stroke rehab, especially for patients who can't undergo therapy because of spasticity. The keyword here is *indirectly*. **Botox itself doesn't resolve spasticity long-term – it simply creates the opportunity to exercise, which can improve your spasticity for good.**

WebMD quoted him saying, "We often use Botox to reduce spasticity so patients can participate in therapy that leads to ... recovery." In other words, **Botox creates the opportunity to exercise, and exercise is what leads to recovery.**

## Botox for Stroke Recovery

Overall, Botox is an excellent treatment for spasticity when used as an opportunity to move your affected muscles and rewire your brain. Botox alone creates temporary results. Botox coupled with rehab exercise creates lasting results.