

5 Ways to Boost Movement Recovery After Stroke

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There are a lot of new variables to manage during stroke recovery, and sometimes it's easy to lose sight of what's important. So today, we'd like to give a nice refresher of 5 simple practices that can help boost movement recovery after stroke in a big way. They might sound simple – but don't disregard them. You can reap a LOT of gains if you practice them all diligently.

5. Sleeeep

Let's start with the simplest thing for us to practice: sleep.

It's a well-known fact that lack of sleep is linked with poor brain function. We all need plenty of sleep so that our brain gets a chance to detoxify and recharge itself. And while detoxifying and recharging your brain is pretty important during recovery, something even cooler happens during sleep: Your brain turn short-term memories about muscle

movement into long-term memories that become stored in your motor cortex. **Meaning, sleep helps your brain absorb your rehab exercises better!**

This works best when you're able to get into REM sleep, which happens after you're asleep for 90 minutes or longer. So while catnaps are great for powering through the day, try to get a good night's sleep each night.

And if you have trouble sleeping, then try practicing some meditation or relaxation techniques. And if that still doesn't work, double-check the side effects of any medication you're taking. If trouble sleeping is a side effect, talk to your doctor about alternatives.

4. Showing Up

Motivation is key for recovery.

If you don't want to succeed, you won't. But if you're stubborn about recovery and you refuse to give up, then you will go very far – perhaps even farther than anyone thought! While you can browse through [our motivation articles](#) to learn specific tips and tricks, there's one motivational principle that you can start practicing without any tips.

And that tip is to *just show up*. No matter how little time you have; no matter how good the excuses are; no matter how much you don't feel like it... *just show up*.

Don't aim for perfection. You don't need perfect conditions to start. Just show up. And when you show up, whatever happens is good enough – perhaps even great.

3. Mental Practice / Visualization

If you don't take 'hippie stuff' like visualization seriously enough to practice, then we hope you'll reconsider. Because visualization is scientifically proven to help boost movement recovery after stroke. Because when you spend time visualizing yourself moving, you initiate neuroplasticity the same way that physical movement does!

For example, in [Healing & Happiness After Stroke](#), we tell the story of a yoga teacher who used yoga and visualization to boost her movement recovery after stroke. Each day she would visualize herself practicing one pose. And each day she would get a little better at it! Try it for yourself and see how it works for you. This article explains [how to start your visualization practice](#).

2. Consistency

Another essential ingredient for improving movement after stroke is consistency. As you practice your rehab exercises, you send stimulation to your brain and it begins to rewire itself. The more your brain starts to rewire itself, the more improvement you will see.

But your brain needs *consistent* stimulation, otherwise all the new connections that you're forming will begin to fade. Doing your rehab exercises 'when you feel like it' might not cut it.

Whatever regimen you decide to practice, make a commitment and *stick with it*. You will see better and faster improvement this way.

1. Repetitive Practice

Repetitive practice is BY FAR the #1 thing you need to improve movement after stroke. Repetitive practice simply means repeating your rehab exercises over and over and over. Don't underestimate the power of this simple technique. We placed it at #1 for a reason.

Repetition is brain food. The more repetition you feed your brain, the more fuel it has to rewire itself and hang onto those motor gains.

That's why our patients see such great success with MusicGlove. It motivates you to complete hundreds of repetitions per session, which leads to more improvement than the 40-something repetitions you complete during tabletop therapy.

As you begin to focus on repetitive practice, remember to implement the other 4 steps in this article. When combined, they can lead to significant movement improvement after stroke.