

13 Best Stroke Treatments

September 29, 2017



When it comes to stroke treatment, there's a LOT to understand, and we're here to simplify it for you.

In this article, you'll learn about the wide array of stroke treatments available for the **most common stroke side effects (2/27/2017)**. Before we get into it, we'll briefly discuss the treatment that happens immediately when stroke happens.

Stroke Treatment Starts Immediately

A stroke occurs when the supply of blood to the brain is compromised by either a clogged artery (ischemic stroke) or burst artery (hemorrhagic stroke).

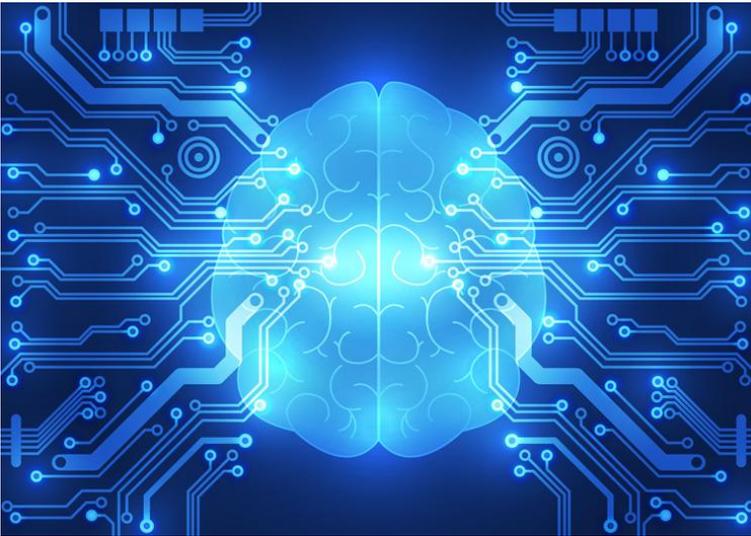
For ischemic stroke treatment, clot-busting drugs like aspirin or TPA are administered as soon as possible in order to help dissolve the clot. For hemorrhagic stroke treatment, surgery is often required to help stop the bleeding. Both of these treatments help restore blood flow in the brain and stop the stroke. This is the first treatment that occurs, and treatment also continues well after.

Why Stroke Treatment Is an Ongoing Process

Unfortunately, no matter how quickly treatment is administered in the hospital, brain damage occurs from the lack of oxygen-rich blood in the brain during the stroke. This damage results in stroke side effects like impaired movement or language difficulties, for example. And since **every stroke is different**, every stroke patient will have unique side effects. These side effects need to be treated too, which is what the rest of this article will focus on.

Understanding the Goal of Stroke Treatment

Before we dig into further treatment options, it's very important for you to understand a little neuroscience behind how it all works. The focus of almost all stroke treatment is to activate **neuroplasticity** in your brain, which is the process that your brain uses to rewire and reorganize itself.



Neuroplasticity will help your brain compensate for the damage from stroke; and you can activate neuroplasticity through practice. Whatever you repeatedly practice is what your brain gets good at. Repetition is how you will relearn skills after stroke.

You will notice that almost all of these treatment options involve practice because you want to spark neuroplasticity as much as possible. Now that you understand the neuroscience, let's dig into the treatment options for the most common stroke side effects.

Guides: "How Repetition Heals the Brain Faster After Stroke" -- 10/12/2016 & How Neuroplasticity Works – 10/1/2015

1. The Best Stroke Treatment for Paralysis or Weakness in the Body

One of the most common side effects after stroke is movement impairment. Typically it affects one side of your body. But for **brain stem strokes**, it may affect both sides of the body.

The cause of movement impairments is *brain-muscle miscommunication*. Because your brain cannot communicate with your muscles anymore, your muscles can't hear the command to move.

The solution, therefore, is to restore this brain-muscles communication by activating neuroplasticity through rehab exercise.



The more you move your affected muscles through repetitious, therapeutic movements, the more you activate neuroplasticity and rewire your brain. With enough practice, the new connections in your brain will get stronger and stronger and soon your muscles will be able to move more and more.

If you're interested in a home therapy device that helps motivate you to achieve high repetition, then check out our **FitMi home therapy device**. It helps you get at least 12x more repetition and activate neuroplasticity to the max!

Guides: How to Improve Movement After Stroke – 1/13/2015 & “Full Body Exercises for Stroke Patients” – 9/25/2015

2. Extra Treatments for Impaired Movement After Stroke



Rehab exercise will be your bread-and-butter method for improving movement after stroke. It's where most of your gains will come from. If you'd like to take things up a notch, then you can look into **mirror therapy** and **mental practice**. They both help activate neuroplasticity even more. This way, when you add these treatments on top of your current rehab exercise regimen, you'll see even faster results.

Guides: How Mirror Therapy Works (9/8/2015) & How Mental Practice Speeds Up Stroke Recovery (8/25/2017)

3. Treatment for Spasticity After Stroke

Spasticity involves stiff, tight muscles caused by miscommunication between your brain and your muscles.

Normally, your muscles are in constant communication with your brain by sending signals to contract and relax. When stroke damages part of the brain that controls your muscles, this communication is broken and suddenly your muscles can't hear the signals to relax.

Therefore, in order to treat spasticity, you need to relink your brain to your muscles, which is achieved through **practicing rehab exercises**.

Although it may sound counterintuitive, moving your stiff, spastic muscles is the best way to get them to loosen.

And if your muscles are too stiff to start exercising, you can use Botox to relax your muscles.

But be aware that **Botox** is only a temporary treatment because it wears off in a few months. In order to permanently overcome spasticity, you need to do rehab exercises.

Guide: How to Permanently Treat Post Stroke Spasticity for Good! – 2/5/2016

Advanced Stroke Treatments

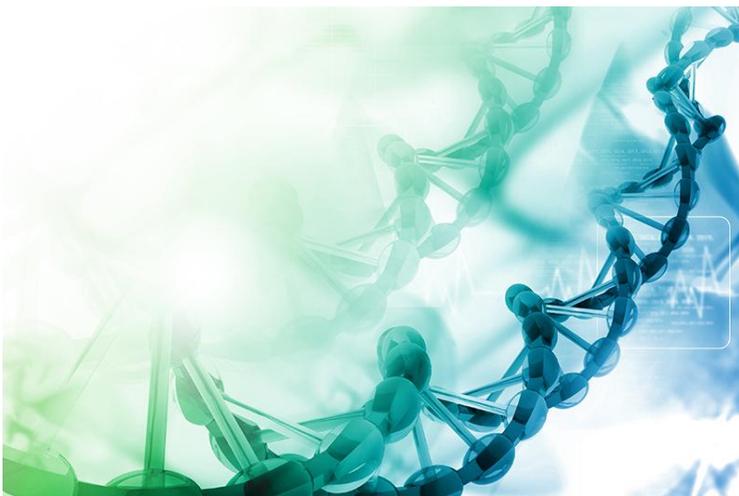
Now that you understand the best way to improve movement after stroke (rehab exercise), we'll dig into some "fancy" treatments that you might want to look into.

Before digging in, you need to understand that **in order to see successful movement improvement with any of these treatments, you need to be practicing rehab exercises**.

While these treatments help facilitate healing in the brain, your brain still needs the stimulation from rehab exercises in order to relink your mind to your muscles.

With that said, here are the advanced stroke treatment options:

4. Stem Cell Treatment



Stem cell treatment involves injecting stem cells into your bloodstream. Then, where the stem cells then travel around looking for damaged cells to restore.

Overall, the reported side effects are low and the treatment seems quite effective.

Guide: How Stem Cell Treatment for Stroke Recovery Works – 8/6/2015

5. Oxygen Therapy

Oxygen therapy involves lying in an oxygen chamber while inhaling pure oxygen for 60-90 minutes. This increases the amount of oxygen in the brain.

Providing extra oxygen to the brain during stroke recovery is beneficial because the brain actually consumes 20% of your body's oxygen even though it represents 2% of your body weight.

When your brain is busy rewiring itself after stroke, it requires *even more* oxygen. So oxygen therapy helps supply your brain with extra 'brain food' to fuel neuroplasticity.

Guide: How Oxygen Therapy for Stroke Recovery Works – 7/25/2016

6. Magnetic Brain Stimulation

Magnetic brain stimulation is a cutting-edge treatment where a neurologist waves a magnetic device over your head.

This is a very new treatment that's still undergoing heavy research, but it's worth looking into if you're desperate for a way to boost results after stroke.

Guide: How Magnetic Brain Stimulation for Stroke Recovery Works – 2/3/2016

7. Traditional Chinese Medicine



Traditional Chinese Medicine is perhaps best known for its skin-pricking practice of acupuncture.

Some [studies](#) consider acupuncture an excellent treatment for post stroke paralysis while other [studies](#) say that it's just the placebo effect.

Either way, it's still helping you see better results. So after consulting with your doctor for approval, why not give it a try?

Guide: How Traditional Chinese Medicine for Stroke Recovery Works – 6/3/2016

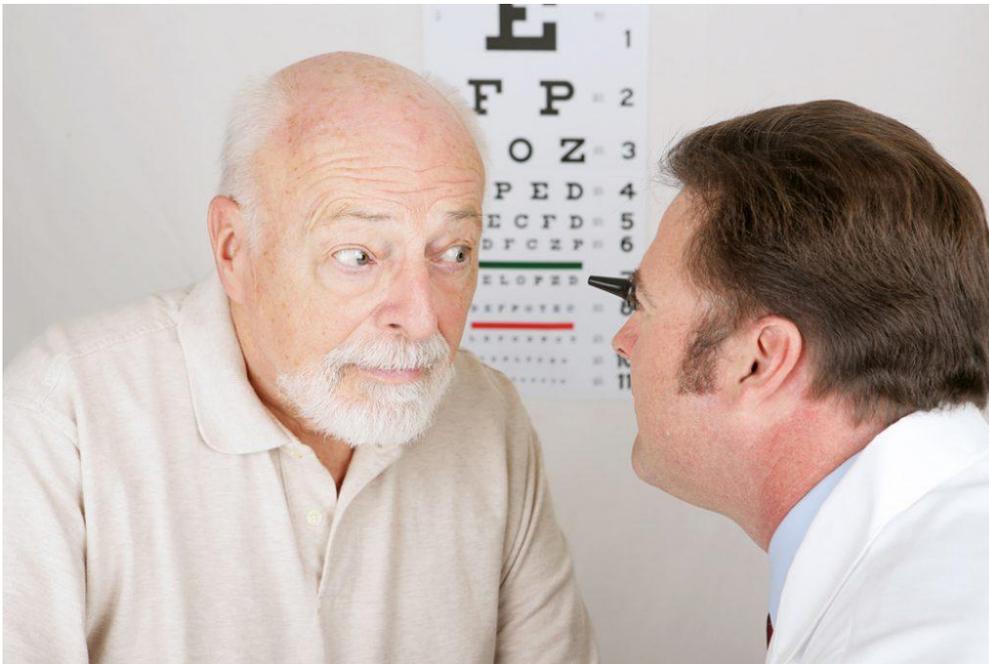
8. Treatment for Uncontrollable Emotions After Stroke

When stroke affects the emotion center of the brain, it can result in *emotional lability*. This condition causes you to experience uncontrollable emotions like laughter or crying when the situation isn't necessarily funny or sad.

Emotional lability can be treated through medication or by rewiring your brain by consciously practicing feeling your emotions. If that sounds odd, see the guide below for further instruction.

Guide: How to Treat Emotional Lability After Stroke – 5/19/2017

9. Treatment for Impaired Vision After Stroke



When stroke affects the vision center of your brain, it can worsen your eyesight. The great news is that “[eye exercises](#)” (8/21/2015) can usually help improve your vision. Be sure to practice consistently so that you have the repetition necessary to facilitate healing in your brain. There are also other vision treatments available like [visual restoration therapy](http://www.novavision.com) (<http://www.novavision.com>) that can help improve your eyesight after stroke.

Guide: How to Treat Vision Problems After Stroke -- 4/7/2017

10. Treatment for Impaired Attention After Stroke

Sometimes stroke affects your ability to notice what's happening in your environment on the affected side of your body. For example, if stroke affected your right side and someone comes and sits next to you on your right side, you might not notice them. This is a condition known as *one-sided neglect*, and it can be treated just like most other side effects: through practice. By practicing turning to your affected side and noticing what's there, you'll get better and better at paying attention to your affected side.

Guide: How to Treat One-Sided Neglect After Stroke -- 11/13/2015

11. Treatment for Impaired Memory After Stroke

Impaired memory is a common cognitive side effect of stroke. While memory naturally improves for some stroke patients, it does not for others. In that case, you can take active steps to improve your memory by – surprise, surprise – practicing using your memory. (Good ol' neuroplasticity is always the answer.)

Guide: How to Improve Memory After Stroke -- 6/30/2017

12. Treatment for Not Being Able to Feel After Stroke



If you are having mixed sensations on your affected side, then you may have sensory issues after stroke.

Sensory issues can cause you to have:

- Numbness
- Hypersensitivity
- Trouble feeling hot or cold

These sensory issues happen because the brain cannot properly interpret your senses (usually because of a right side stroke). Luckily, you can retrain your senses through – you guessed it – exercise. Specifically, sensory reeducation exercises (3/27/2017).

Guide: Learning How to Feel Again After Stroke -- 3/31/2017

13. Treatment for Pain After Stroke

Unfortunately, post stroke pain is a common side effect. There are multiple ways to treat it based on what kind of pain you have.

Type 1: Central Post Stroke Pain

Central post stroke pain (CPSP) is a chronic condition that can feel like a pins-and-needles sensation or an icy burning sensation. This condition happens when the brain misinterprets stimuli (like heat/cold) for pain. CPSP can be treated with medication like gabapentin and pregabalin.

Type 2: Pain Due to Spasticity

As you learned earlier in this article, spasticity can be treated through rehab exercise that helps relink your mind to your muscles. However, if post stroke pain is preventing you from engaging in exercise, then it's a good idea to consider getting Botox injections to loosen your muscles in the meantime.

Type 3: Pain Due to Mixed Sensory Signals

Sometimes pain happens because the brain is misinterpreting your senses as pain. For example, the touch of a soft blanket might be misinterpreted by your brain as pain. In this case, you try to alleviate this pain through [sensory reeducation exercises \(3/27/2017\)](#). Your therapist will be able to distinguish which type of post stroke pain you suffer from and which treatment is best for you.

Guide: [How to Treat Post-Stroke Pain –2/10/2017](#)

Stroke Treatment Wrap Up

Congrats! You've reached the end. By now, you're an expert on stroke treatment and recovery. You have a firm understanding of how repetition helps cure most stroke side effects by activating neuroplasticity and rewiring your brain.

Before you commit to anything new, be sure to run new treatments by your doctor to ensure that it's a safe option for you.

We wish you the best of luck on the road to recovery!