

# How to Regain Balance After Stroke (5 Causes & Treatments)

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Learning how to regain balance after stroke is essential for preventing falls.

However, when attempting to regain balance after stroke, most patients mistakenly focus on their legs as the primary problem; but that's not always the case.

There are many different factors that contribute to your balance, and when any of these factors are thrown off, your balance is thrown off as well.

To help solve this problem, you're about to learn the 5 main causes of balance problems after stroke and how to treat each one – starting with the most common cause: impaired mobility.

# 1. Balance & Impaired Mobility

The most common cause of poor balance after stroke is impaired muscle coordination, particularly in these 3 areas:

- Impaired leg movement or foot drop
- [Hemiplegia or hemiparesis](#)
- Impaired core strength

Your feet, legs, and core all work extremely hard to maintain your balance. So if you can improve these areas, then your balance will improve too.

Treatment:

**To improve balance after stroke, start performing [leg rehab exercises](#) and [core rehab exercises](#) consistently.**

Whenever there is a mobility impairment in the body, the best treatment is exercise because it [restores your mind/muscle communication](#).

The more you practice moving, the more your balance will improve.

# 2. Balance & Foot Drop

Now let's specifically hone in on foot drop.

[Foot drop](#) is a condition that impairs your ability to lift the front of your foot, which can cause it to drag on the floor when you walk.

This is a dangerous stroke side effect because it impairs your balance and increases the likelihood of falling.

Treatment:

[Foot drop exercises for stroke patients](#) are an excellent way to regain mobility in your foot. They help you relink your mind to your muscles and improve your coordination.

Another way to treat food drop is by getting an AFO (ankle foot orthosis) or foot drop brace. These tools attach to your shoe and help prevent your foot from dragging when you walk.

The Upside and Downside of Using AFOs

Please understand 2 things if you are considering getting an AFO:

First, getting an AFO is excellent for increasing your safety and preventing devastating falls. If your therapists suggests one, then absolutely listen to them!

Second, you should understand that AFOs prevent you from engaging your foot muscles. They're [a compensation technique that addresses the symptom, not the problem](#).

And when you completely neglect using your affected muscles, you can end up with [learned nonuse](#), a condition where your brain completely forgets how to use those muscles.

To avoid this, don't completely neglect your foot. Get some [foot drop exercises](#) in so that you can eventually improve enough movement that you don't need the AFO.

### 3. Balance & Impaired Vision

Poor vision is another physical impairment that can cause poor balance after stroke.

Your eyes are controlled by 6 muscles, and when stroke impairs your ability to control these muscles, then your vision worsens.

Treatment:

Impaired vision after stroke can be restored through [eye exercises](#).

Eye exercises help stimulate those 6 muscles around your eyes. As you exercise these muscles, you activate neuroplasticity and start to rewire your brain.

The more you practice, the more your vision will improve as your brain continues to heal.

(See [this complete guide to treating vision problems](#) for more information.)

### 4. Balance & Concentration

Not all balance problems are caused by lack of coordination. Sometimes it's a [cognitive problem](#) like impaired concentration and attention.

When stroke affects your ability to concentrate, it can result in poor balance because you cannot pay enough attention to your environment. For example, you may slip on a step, not because your legs are weak, but because you did not *notice* the step.

Treatment:

If poor balance is caused by lack of concentration and awareness, then you can treat it by *practicing paying more concentration and awareness*. Although that may sound obvious, it requires conscious effort.

So for 10 minutes every day, walk safely around your home (or other safe place) and pour extra attention into your body and environment. This is a mindfulness practice, so pay attention to your sensations.

The more you pay attention to your environment, the better your concentration will become! You are what you repeatedly do.

## 5. Balance & One-Sided Neglect

A more specific example of impaired concentration after stroke is a side effect known as [one-sided neglect](#) (which is [very different from vision problems](#)).

Stroke survivors with one-sided neglect have an attention impairment that prevents them from noticing people and things in the environment on their affected side.

When you have difficulty noticing half of your environment, it can impair your balance because you can't pay full attention.

Treatment:

To treat one-sided neglect, practice paying attention to your affected side.

Schedule 10 minutes into each day where you purposely turn to your affected side. Turn to that side and simply notice what's there.

Be as mindful and present as you can, and this will send stimulation to your brain to acknowledge that side. The more you practice noticing your affected side, the better you will get at it.

## Notice Any Themes Here?

Have you noticed what all these treatments have in common?

[Practice.](#)

Your balance can be improved through practice because your brain is on your side and it adapts to whatever you repeatedly do.

The hard part is figuring out what needs to be improved. Is it your legs or your core? Or is it your mobility or your concentration?

Use this guide to figure out what you need to work on, then [start your practice](#).