

Arm and Wrist Exercises for Stroke Patients

August 7, 2015



At-home arm and wrist exercises for stroke patients

Before diving into the exercises, we'll discuss the essential elements that every stroke rehab regimen needs.

Then we'll move onto the good stuff.

What Every Stroke Rehabilitation Regimen Needs

Repetition. There's no way around it, a high number of repetitions is the only way you can help your brain relearn movements. This phenomenon is known as brain plasticity.

Variety. Make sure your regimen includes a variety of different exercises. And if you can't do anything outside of a certain set, switch it up! Do the set in a different order or do certain ones on different days. Adding a little randomness helps prevent your brain from zoning out and your attention will remain focused on your exercises.

Consistency. Along with variety, we also need consistency in our regimen. Try your best not to skip any sessions and this will help boost your recovery.

Rest. Be sure to give yourself breaks in between your exercises. It gives your brain time to absorb all the stimulation from your rehabilitation routine.

Gentle Arm and Wrist Exercises for Stroke Patients

Exercise #1

You will need: A tabletop

With your hands in your lap, practice placing your hands onto the table without moving your shoulders up. As you get better at this movement, place your hands farther and farther away from you. The key to this exercise is to keep your shoulders down and resist elevating them. Repeat 10 times.

Exercise #2-3

You will need: A ball

Sit beside a table with the ball on top of the table. Then, with your forearm parallel to the table, push the ball on the table with your wrist and fingers pointed in extension. 'Extension' means that your wrist is flexed backward towards your body, so that your palm is facing forward and your hand feels like you're motioning someone to 'STOP.' Practice this pushing movement 10 times.

Another exercise to do with the ball is to hold the ball with both hands and then let go. Repeat 10 times.

Exercise #4-5

You will need: A jar

Simply hold the jar with your affected hand and unscrew it with your unaffected hand. Your affected hand will practice grasping and gripping the jar while your 'good' hand does the movement. Try this in sets of 5.

A second exercise is to just pass this jar, or other handheld object like a beanbag, back and forth from one hand to the other, making sure to move deliberately. This exercise can be done in sets of 10.