

Stroke Recovery Tips

www.stroke-rehab.com

GETTING THE HAND TO OPEN AFTER STROKE



Sometimes after stroke, the affected hand will tend to close and will be difficult if not impossible to open on one's own accord. The following are some suggestions on getting the hand to open:

1. If spasticity is a problem, consult with a MD to see if there are medications that will help or if botox injections are an option to reduce spasticity.
2. Consult with your occupational therapist and see if you are a candidate to use electrical stimulation to help facilitate the muscles that open the hand.
3. If you can bend the fingers but not open them on your own, you may be a candidate for using the

SaeboFlex. Visit the Saebo.com website to find a therapist trained in fitting their products and have them do an evaluation to see if you are a candidate. If your fingers don't bend at all, you may still be a candidate for the Saebo Stretch or you can consult a hand therapist regarding a possible splinting solution.

4. Stretch the fingers out and attempt to weight bear on an object like a soccer ball with the hand. Work on trying to keep the hand spread out on the ball while moving it side to side or forward and back. You are trying to keep the hand relaxed in an open position while

adding arm movement. Start with small movements then move on to bigger movements trying to keep the hand on the ball. If you get to the point that you can keep the hand open on the ball and move it around, progress to holding the ball between both hands and trying to lift it without the affected hand curling up or falling off. Again move from small to larger movements. The point is to try to do arm movements without the hand pulling into a flexed (fisted) position.

5. Try mirror box therapy and/or mental imagery (visit mirroboxtherapy.com and gradedimagery.com)

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Stroke Clinical Trials

Stroke clinical trials are stroke-related research studies in humans. Each study will have its own criteria for participation. These clinical studies can help participants gain access to new research treatment before it is widely available. Experimental treatments may not always be effective, and there may be serious side effects so there can be risks involved with such studies. Below is a list of links to help find stroke clinical trials:

[Stroke studies](http://Strokestudies.at.clinicaltrials.gov) at clinicaltrials.gov

[Clinical Trials Resource Center](#) from National Stroke Association

[Stroke Trials Registry](#) at strokecenter.org (also includes links for trials in countries outside of US)

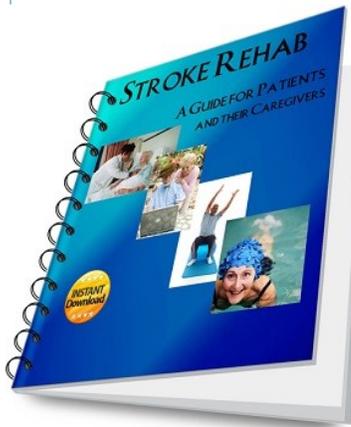
[Stroke studies](#) at Stanford School of Medicine

[Clinical Connection](#) – Enter your own search criteria

[Stroke trials](#) at the Mayo Clinic

These research studies can be a great way for some patients to get extra therapy without cost. Most of these clinical studies require

that a patient meet certain criteria so when looking for a trial, make sure that you meet the requirements. There are many types of trials. Some deal with trying new medicines, controlling spasticity, rehabilitation techniques, using new robotic devices, and improving speech or cognition to name a few. A stroke study could be beneficial to a patient who is looking for help in a specific area. Unfortunately, these trials and studies can be spread out and are not always available in the area where one lives, but it is definitely worth looking into. One will need to check periodically for trials as new ones emerge on a regular basis.



Stroke Rehab e-book: A Guide for Patients and their Caregivers

Exercise photos included

Visit

[http://www.amazon.com/
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Caregivers-ebook/dp/
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Stroke Rehab e-book Now Available on Amazon.com

Stroke Rehab: A Guide for Patients and Caregivers is now available on [Amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com) for \$9.99 (this price is \$5 cheaper than offered on my website). The **e-book** is a comprehensive manual with information about stroke rehabilitation, exercises, stroke resources, adaptive equipment, home exercise equipment, clinical trials, support groups and information for caregivers. This guide is easy to understand, provides abundant resources, and has a section devoted to answering questions asked by real stroke patients and their caregivers. It has been written in layman terms without all the confusing medical jargon. Topics covered in the guide include:

Neuroplasticity
Range of Motion
Sitting Balance
Standing Balance
Weight Bearing
Regaining Arm Control

Arm and Leg Exercises
Constraint Induced Movement Therapy
Fine Motor Coordination
Sensory Re-education
Edema Management
Cognitive Retraining (Brain Exercises)
Vision Exercises
Dysphagia, Dysarthria, and Oral Facial Exercises
Aphasia
Compensatory Techniques
Adaptive Equipment
Home Exercise Equipment Suggestions
Adaptive Clothing
Stroke Websites and Resources
Caregiver Websites and Resources
Stroke Support Group Information
Questions from Stroke Patients and more

If you purchase the guide on Amazon, please don't forget to leave your review of the e-book! **Please note this is a downloadable e-book not a hard copy book!**

CAREGIVER CORNER: SAVING YOUR MARRIAGE

Unfortunately, after stroke, many marriages are adversely affected due to the changes that occur. Some of these changes may include:

1. The roles of partners change from that of equal to one spouse bearing the caregiver burden and one becoming more dependent.
2. Negative personality/emotional changes may occur in the stroke survivor.
3. Decreased socialization and isolation from friends.
4. Decreased cognitive function or communication in the stroke survivor.
5. Resentment from the caregiver.
6. Inability of the caregiver to cope.
7. Lack of sexual fulfillment.

Keeping the marriage intact may be easier for some and

more difficult for others. Some solutions to help address the adverse effects of stroke on marriage include:

1. Visit with a marriage counselor (even if only you as a caregiver attend).
2. Have the stroke patient consult with a neuropsychologist to address emotional issues/personality changes.
3. Get involved in a stroke support group and caregiver support group. The socialization and ability to vent can be a very positive experience.
4. As a caregiver, you must avoid burnout. Allow others to help you with the role of caregiver.
5. Make sure to continue socializing with friends even if they now have to come to your house instead of going out.
6. Do not enable or make the stroke survivor too dependent on you. As a caregiver, you should help your spouse become as independent as possible easing the burden on yourself and giving your loved one a sense of accomplishment and independence.
7. Read this article regarding redefining sexuality after stroke: <http://www.strokesmart.org/article?id=96>
8. If sexual intercourse is not possible, remember that there are other sexual activities that you can enjoy.
9. Don't forget that you have taken vows to stand by your spouse for better or worse and that a life change like this will take time and major adjustment.
10. Don't forget that the stroke patient has a brain injury and may possibly never act the same as before the stroke.