

Stroke Recovery Tips

www.stroke-rehab.com

MOVING BEYOND BASIC BALANCE EXERCISES



Once patients discontinue therapy, many of them have learned to walk and transfer themselves, however, this doesn't mean balance cannot be further improved. In fact, many patients continue to have balance that is quite impaired. If you have mastered walking/transfers and would like to find ways to further improve your balance, then keep reading. Please note that you should consult with your MD or therapist before trying exercises to make sure the exercises are appropriate for you. You may also need to hold on or have assistance to do balance exercises

Ideas for more challenging-balance activities and links to exercises:

Stepping up and down on a step. Try leading with the

strong leg and also with the weak leg

Balancing on a balance board or foam surface

Walking on uneven surfaces such as grassy areas, dirt path or beach

Standing on one leg as long as you can

Practice getting up and down from the floor

Attempt to kick a ball back and forth with someone

Walking and dribbling a ball at the same time.

Practice dance moves, side stepping, backwards walking, etc

Take a martial arts class

BOSU ball exercises

Swiss ball exercises

Core strengthening exercises

Balance exercises on Wii Fit

Links to pictures of these various exercises can be accessed at the following websites:

<http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/fitness/Pages/balance-exercises-for-older-people.aspx>

<http://www.bosu.com/active-aging>

<http://www.exercise-ball-exercises.com/exercise-ball-workouts.html>

<http://profound.eu.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/Backward-Chairing3.pdf>

<http://hhd.fullerton.edu/csa/research/documents/IDEA/BandMExerciseProgressions.pdf>

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Do You Know How You Feel? (Sensation Issues)

Sensory loss and changes after stroke are common. What has amazed me in my therapy practice is how few stroke survivors receive a thorough sensory evaluation. Even more shocking to me has been how patients were unaware of their sensory loss. I have seen patients who could not even tell when I placed an object (even as big as a lotion bottle) in their hand when their eyes were closed.

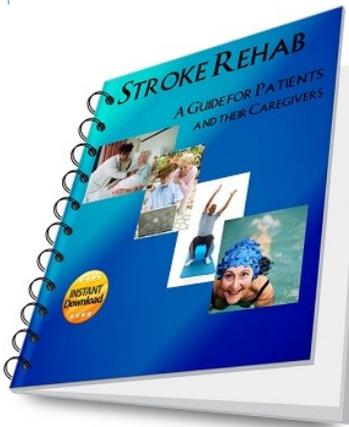
The reason it is so important to have a sensory exam is because you may have a loss of protective sensation which means you

can cut, burn and injure a body part without knowing it. If you notice frequent bruises, cuts/scrapes, or burns to certain parts of your body (hands are often involved), then you may have poor sensation. Individuals with poor sensation to the hands will often appear to be uncoordinated frequently dropping items and holding items in a peculiar way.

Proprioception (a sense of your body in space or what position your joints are in) can also be affected by stroke. If you find your arm and leg in awkward positions, have trouble making your arm or leg go where

you want, or can't tell what position your affected limb is in when your eyes are closed, then you may have problems with proprioception. This can lead to knocking things over with an affected arm or even falling with an affected leg.

In order to address sensory problems, ask your therapist about a sensory re-education program to help improve your awareness of touch and body in space. You can work on sensory re-education yourself at home as well. To find out more about sensory re-education, visit <http://www.stroke-rehab.com/sensory-re-education.html>.



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

Exercise photos included

Visit

[http://www.amazon.com/
Stroke-Rehab-Guide-Patients-
Caregivers-ebook/dp/
B00ZY709M8/](http://www.amazon.com/Stroke-Rehab-Guide-Patients-Caregivers-ebook/dp/B00ZY709M8/)



MEDICAL PROFESSIONALS:

If you are a medical professional that works with stroke patients and caregivers, please attend my webinar this month on 9/23/15 via the National Stroke Association's website. I will be discussing how to engage caregivers to improve patient compliance and rehabilitation outcomes.

Stroke Rehab Forum

I have started a new stroke forum/discussion board at forum.stroke-rehab.com. The forum is just getting started, and I need your help in getting it going and having active participants. When I originally set it up, I unknowingly had it set where I had to approve every post, but now you can post freely and respond quickly to one another as I have disabled this function.

On the forum, you can introduce yourself or participate in different forums designed to address different issues. The categories include discussions about general stroke, caregiver issues, stroke issues of younger stroke survivors, pediatric stroke issues, and issues faced by new mothers who have experienced stroke after childbirth.

There are currently some questions unanswered regarding recovery from basal ganglia stroke and dealing with foot numbness so if you have experience with this or

have some suggestions, please respond to these posts.

Thank you for helping to get the Stroke Rehab Forum going, and I hope you will find it of benefit and share it with others!

Please note that it can be very helpful to interact with other stroke patients and caregivers. It can provide you with an emotional release, help you know that there are others going through the same thing, allow you to receive encouragement, and help you find solutions to common stroke problems. I cannot emphasize enough how beneficial stroke support groups and stroke forums can be.

CAREGIVER CORNER: WHAT DO I NEED TO KNOW

If you are a caregiver of a stroke patient, certain information should have been shared with you before your loved one discharged from the hospital/inpatient rehab/therapy program. The information is meant to help you care for your loved one and promote the best recovery possible. Unfortunately, sometimes caregivers are too overwhelmed by the situation and forget/lose information shared or they never received the information in the first place.

Below is a summary of information you should have received. If you have not received this information, I suggest contacting the medical professionals involved in your loved one's care and seeing if they will provide you the information. You can also search for info online and/or visit a caregivers website to help.

Here is information you need to know (some information will not apply to all—it will depend on your loved one's severity of stroke):

1. Basic nursing skills to take care of a patient such as oral care, peri-care, skin care, and how to handle equipment if applicable such as catheters, peg tubes, etc.
2. Forming a toileting schedule if the patient is incontinent or has accidents.
3. How to transfer a patient.
4. How to help with patient's home exercise program and how to make it harder as the patient improves.
5. What doctors to follow up with (e.g. cardiologist/neurologist)
6. How to help prevent

future strokes.

7. Medication schedule and what medications are for. Some medications such as blood thinners will require the patient be followed frequently by a MD.
8. How to set up your home with adaptive equipment, make home modifications, and performing a fall risk inventory.
9. How to get your loved one up from the floor if they fall.
10. Any diet restrictions.
11. Warning signs to look for that may indicate something is wrong (e.g. coughing when eating, bouts of pneumonia, confusion, further decline in function, etc.)
12. Where to find a stroke support group and stroke resources.
13. Info about local/state/federal resources/disability information.

PLEASE NOTE—THIS IS NOT AN EXHAUSTIVE LIST!