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How to Regain Your Independence After a Stroke

Therapy and assistive technology can help you

by Myomo (Paid Content)

Arm paralyzed by stroke? You may be able to use it again.

As we grow older, maintaining mobility is essential to our independence. Having a stroke may greatly impact one's ability to move and use legs, arms, and hands. Nearly three-quarters of all strokes occur in people over the age of 65, and the risk of having a stroke more than doubles each decade after the age of 55, according to the National Institutes of Health.¹

After a stroke, you want to get back to the everyday activities you used to do without needing help. You want to be independent, and not rely on others for everyday activities.

While rehabilitation through therapy can be effective, remarkable breakthroughs in technology are greatly expanding recovery options that help patients regain their mobility. Here's what you need to know.

Therapy Can Help

Stroke reduces mobility in more than half of stroke survivors age 65 and over.² To restore basic skills, three types of therapy are often used – physical, occupational, and speech. The overall idea is that repetitive use of traumatized limbs allows the nerves to “re-learn” behavior. This is known as “neuroplasticity.”

Some patients enjoy success in restoring, or partially restoring, mobility after weeks of therapy and exercise. Others continue to struggle. Therapy alone, while often useful, has its limitations. For many, after exhaustive therapy, deficits persist in an arm and hand or leg and foot. At this point, patients are typically told they will be living with that paralyzed limb for the rest of their lives.

Assistive Technology Can Further Restore Mobility and Function

For those with weakness or paralysis in their legs or feet, the options for assistive technology are commonplace. Wheelchairs, scooters, walkers, and ankle-foot orthoses (AFO) enhance mobility. For arms and hands, however, options have been far more limited. Great news; this reality is changing quickly.

Working with MIT and Harvard Medical School, the Cambridge-based robotics company Myomo (My Own Motion) has developed a game-changer for stroke rehabilitation. Their powered orthosis arm brace – like a “powered wheelchair” for your arm and hand – senses the faint nerve signals from your skin's surface. Tiny motors in the brace then make your arm and hand do what you intend them to do.

Without implants or electrical stimulation, this revolutionary orthosis powered brace has helped many hundreds of stroke survivors feed and dress themselves, perform household chores, and get back to hobbies. Some have even returned to work. Additionally, the orthosis allows for daily repetitive motion, continuing the process of neuroplasticity.

“I had to ask whomever I was with ‘Can you cut my steak please?’ I wasn't able to do anything with my hand. My arm would not move. I had pretty much given up hope of having both hands again. Now I can cut steak myself. Now I have both hands again.”

Experiencing a stroke can be debilitating. It's the leading cause of serious long-term disability due to limb weakness or paralysis. Often the result is a loss of independence, which can be both physically and emotionally taxing. With therapy and assistive technology, like Myomo's powered orthosis arm brace, you may be able to restore mobility and function, regain your independence, and get back to the activities you love!

[Click here to find out if MyoPro® is right for you or a loved one.](#)

Every case is different; individual results may vary. MyoPro is not right for everyone. Covered by most Medicare Advantage and Blue Cross/Blue Shield plans, the U.S. Veterans Administration, and many other insurance plans.

¹ National Institutes of Health

² American Heart Association

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