

Physical Therapy for Stroke Survivors ~ Why It's Needed and What To Expect

Every year, over 700,000 people in the United States have a stroke. Two thirds of these stroke survivors will require some type of stroke rehabilitation.

The goal of physical therapy for stroke patients is for the patient to achieve the best quality of life by regaining as much independence as possible.

These goals will be achieved by a variety of strengthening and stretching exercises, as well as aerobic conditioning to increase endurance. Functional skills can be rehabilitated by utilizing a variety of balance, movement, and coordination exercises to retrain the body.

Stroke survivors that experience the following would benefit greatly from physical therapy:

1. An inability to perform activities of daily living such as
 - Getting in and out of bed
 - Walking
 - Going up and down stairs
 - Carrying out life roles in a safe, independent and efficient manner
 2. An inability to return to work or recreational activities
 3. Loss of flexibility or strength
 4. Loss of sensation
 5. Impaired coordination
 6. Decreased endurance
 7. Poor balance/Falls
 8. Caregivers have difficulty or are unsafe assisting with patient mobility
 9. Home or work is not accessible to the individual
- (From the American Physical Therapy Association)

It's important to remember it takes time to relearn skills after a stroke. Success is reflective of the patient's determination to be well focused and consistent with his/her exercises. For most stroke survivors, rehab is a lifelong process. The road to recovery can be long and frustrating, so keeping a positive outlook is key. Remember, recovery can be slow ~ but one can keep getting better for years. So, if you have suffered from a stroke or know someone who has, don't give up hope, and always remember to lean on your faith, family, friends, and rehab team for support.

The health information contained herein is provided for educational purposes only and is not intended to replace discussions with a healthcare provider. Decisions regarding patient care must be made with a healthcare provider, considering the unique characteristics of the patient.

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