Physiotherapy

Recovering from a Stroke with your Physical Therapist

What is a Stroke?

Almost 750,000 Canadians are affected by stroke. A stroke can happen to anyone at any time, and each person is affected differently. A stroke occurs when blood flow to the brain is disrupted and damage is done to the brain cells. The extent of the effect of a stroke depends on the amount of the brain damaged. High blood pressure is the leading risk factor for stroke, though other risks include smoking, obesity, diabetes, and high cholesterol.

Physical therapists can help prevent further problems, minimize difficulties, maximize abilities, and help you regain your independence.

Common Problems After a Stroke

- Weakness, paralysis, poor coordination
- Fatigue
- Changes in posture and balance
- Altered sensation in limbs (pain, numbness, pins and needles)
- Inattention/neglect to one side of the body
- Urinary or bowel incontinence
- Speech problems, difficulty reading & writing
- Difficulty swallowing
- Memory problems, poor problem solving skills, limited attention span
- Depression, anxiety, or mood swings
- Visual problems
- Difficulty with daily tasks

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What to Expect During Physical Therapy

Physical therapists work with you, your family, and your healthcare team to meet your specific needs and create meaningful goals for your recovery. We combine education, exercise, hands on treatment and therapeutic techniques to help you get back to your everyday activities.
Physical therapists can help:

- Improve strength, balance, and coordination through targeted exercises for your specific condition to get you back to enjoying life
- Reduce pain that limits daily activities
- Improve heart function to reduce the risk of future disease
- Increase energy, confidence, and independence

How to Access a Physical Therapist

You can call directly to make an appointment with a physical therapist. Depending on your health insurance, you may require a doctor's referral to get reimbursed. You can find a physical therapist in these places:

- Private clinics
- Hospitals and acute care settings
- Long term care facilities
- Home care
- Recreation centers
- Community therapy programs

In Partnership With:

This document was created in the hopes of spreading information on how physical therapy can help those affected by stroke. Students from the School of Physical Therapy have created this document in partnership with the Saskatchewan Physical Therapy Association.

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Find a physiotherapist near you at www.saskphysio.org