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# Physiotherapy and stroke



# What is the role of physiotherapy in rehabilitation of stroke patients?

- The role of **physiotherapy** is very important for rehabilitation of stroke patients, as it forms an essential part in health care provided to the patient.



- **Physical therapy** concerns with restoring and maintaining the functional movement of the body, as well as it helps to improve muscle strength, range of motion of joints, balance, and movement coordination.
- The **main goal** is to help the patient regain independence and improve the quality of life.



## When should physiotherapy start after a stroke?

- Physiotherapy begins as soon as the **patient's condition is stabilized** according to the medical opinion. The earlier treatment has started, chance of restoring lost abilities and skills will increase.

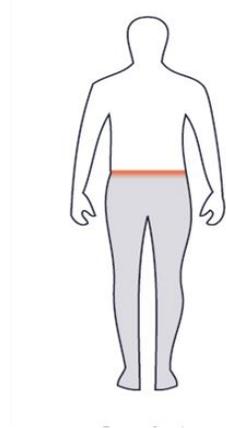


- Physiotherapy sessions often begin **24 to 48 hours** after a stroke.



## How long does the physiotherapy take after a stroke?

- Physiotherapy period may be long or short, depending on the severity of the disease and its complications, and the patient's response to treatment.
- In some cases, the patient recovers from a stroke quickly, and thus the duration of physical therapy can last for a short time, but in cases where the state of **paraplegia** is moderate or severe, the period can last for a longer period, up to months or years after the stroke.



## What is included in the post-stroke physical therapy program?

- At the outset, the specialist evaluates the patient's condition through a **careful clinical examination**, and then develops an appropriate treatment plan fits the patient's needs.

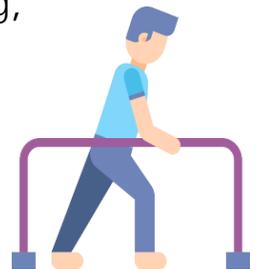


# What is included in the post-stroke physical therapy program?

The program often includes some or all the following activities, depending on the patient's condition and the treatment phase:

## 1. Therapeutic exercises:

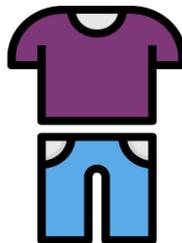
- Exercises that maintain joint mobility and muscle flexibility.
- Exercises that help improve muscle strength and coordination.
- Exercises that improve balance in sitting, standing, and walking.



# What is included in the post-stroke physical therapy program?

## 2. Motor training:

- Training for proper postures and how to move from one place to another.
- Early sit and stand training.
- Focus on treating the upper limb to improve the patient's functional condition.
- Teaching the patient to be independent in daily motor functions such as **eating, dressing, or walking in a correct manner.**



# What is included in the post-stroke physical therapy program?

## 2. Motor training:

Training regarding use of assistive devices such as some prosthetic devices such as crutches, wheelchairs, or splints, and these are described according to the situation and after certain measurements.



## 3. Other Treatments:

- Massage and manual therapy to relieve muscle pain.
- Electrical stimulation helps stimulate muscles and reduce tension.
- Water therapy or the use of hot or cold compresses to relieve pain.



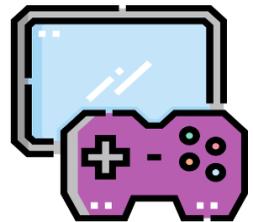
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## 4. Other Treatments:

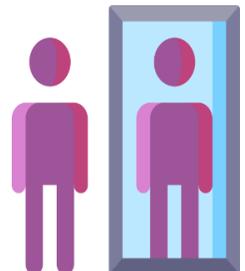
- Treatment of compulsory use by tying the healthy limb during training, as the patient is forced to use the affected limb.



- Virtual therapy, which is a modern treatment method that depends on computer and video games and includes interaction with a similar environment to the real environment.



- Mirror therapy, which is also a new treatment method that relies on the use of a mirror to enhance movement in the affected limb.





## Guidelines for stroke patients:

- The patient should be encouraged to use and move the affected side.
- Avoid pulling the injured shoulder or carrying the patient through the shoulders.
- Take safety measures for injured limbs and during movement.
- Increase awareness of the affected side by talking to the patient from the affected side.





## Guidelines for stroke patients:

- You must follow the correct postures and avoid the wrong positions while sleeping or sitting.



- The patient should be encouraged to do the exercises himself as much as possible and avoid depending on others assistance in order not to lose the ability of self-support.



## Review and audit:

The content of this booklet has been reviewed by  
consultants of the Neurology department at King Fahad  
University Hospital

## Health Awareness Unit

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