

# Recovering From Stroke

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**Stroke may cause** temporary or permanent weakness or paralysis on one side of the body. A person who has suffered a stroke may have difficulty caring for himself or herself, such as in bathing, dressing, and managing a household or a job. Stroke can affect a person's vision, memory, speech, and muscle strength, as well as his or her ability to drive a car safely and engage in typical leisure activities.

Occupational therapists are trained in helping people lead as independent a life as possible. Occupational therapists can help stroke survivors regain their strength to again engage in daily activities.

## What can an occupational therapist do?

- **Recommend** equipment for the home that can aid a person in completing tasks, such as dressing, bathing, preparing meals, and driving.
- **Fabricate** a customized splint to improve hand function.
- **Evaluate** the home for safety hazards and adapt the home by removing hazards that could cause further injury.
- **Provide** training that improves the ability to complete daily tasks.
- **Build** a person's physical endurance and strength.
- **Help** a person compensate for vision and memory loss.

- **Provide** activities that rebuild self-confidence and self-esteem.

## What can family and friends do?

- **Participate** in stroke education classes to become better aware of how a stroke affects a person.
- **Encourage** a stroke survivor to practice tasks to increase strength and endurance and to speed recovery.
- **Consult** an occupational therapist about how to help a person who has suffered a stroke to participate in meaningful daily activities and tasks.

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## Need more information?

A person who has suffered a stroke may take months or even years to recover depending on how severe the stroke. Both the stroke survivor and his or her family should be involved in the recovery and rehabilitation. If you would like to consult an occupational therapist, practitioners are available through most hospitals, medical centers, and clinics.

Occupational therapists and occupational therapy assistants are trained in helping adults and children with a broad range of issues, such as arthritis, traumatic brain injury, and mood disorders. Practitioners also help clients in wellness techniques that may prevent injury and disease.

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