



Changing Your Lifestyle after a Stroke

Stroke is one of the leading causes of death, and the most common cause of disability among adults in the United States. It affects approximately 700,000 individuals each year; about 500,000 are new strokes and 200,000 are recurrent strokes.

General Guidelines for Preventing another Stroke:

- Quit smoking
- Eat a healthy diet
- Regular exercise
- Lose weight if you are overweight or obese
- If you drink alcohol, drink in moderation
Women: (1) drink / day Men: (2) drinks / day
- Manage blood sugar if you have diabetes

Nutrition:

Three risk factors for stroke (poor cholesterol levels, high blood pressure, and excess weight) can be reduced by healthy eating habits.

The American Heart Association offers these recommendations for a health diet:

- Choose whole-grain, high-fiber foods.
- Eat a diet rich in vegetables and fruits (5 servings per day is recommended)
- Eat fish at least twice per week.
- Limit cholesterol, saturated fat and *trans* fat. Avoid partially hydrogenated oils.
- Choose lean meats and poultry, and prepare them without using saturated or *trans* fats.
- Select fat-free, 1-percent or low-fat dairy products.
- Cut back on drinks and foods with added sugars.

Physical Activity:

Physical activity can improve heart functioning while lowering total cholesterol and raising HDL (good cholesterol). It can lower blood pressure and resting heart rate. Being active reduces the risk of obtaining diabetes and improves strength, balance, and endurance. If you need help in setting up a program or returning to normal ADLs after a stroke, call IMGPT at 610-944-8140 to set-up an individualized evaluation and treatment program.

Your Post-Stroke Exercise Goals:

- At least 30 minutes of exercise 5-6 times a week
- Being active — for example, parking further from your destination to increase walking time
- Bucking gravity: Try chair aerobics or water sports
- Using your cane or walker as part of your routine. A physical therapist can show you how to build an assistive device into a healthy exercise program.

For more information on proper nutrition and physical activity please refer to:

http://www.strokeassociation.org/STROKEORG/LifeAfterStroke/Life-After-Stroke_UCM_308546_SubHomePage.jsp

Exercises

Cardiovascular Exercise (5-6 days per week for 30 mins)

- Examples include: Walking, biking, elliptical, pool based aerobics, etc.



Strength Training / Stretching / Balance Exercises (2-3 days per week for 30-45 mins)

- Recommended intensity, frequency, and duration of exercise depends on each individual patient's level of fitness and disability following the stroke. Please consult with a Physical Therapist at IMGPT before starting a training program.

Exercises	Reason for exercise	Frequency
Strength		
• Circuit training	• Increase independence in activities at home	• 1-3 sets of 10-15 repetitions involving the major muscle groups
• Weight machines		
• Free weights		• 2-3 days / wk
• Isometric exercise		
Flexibility		
• Stretching	• Increase motion of involved extremities	• 2-3 days/wk
	• Prevent contractures	• Hold each stretch for 10-30 seconds
Neuromuscular		
• Coordination and balance activities	• Improve level of safety during activities at home	• 2-3 days/wk (consider performing on same day as strength activities)

For more details, please call IMGPT at 610-944-8140