

# Can Reiki Help with Stroke Rehabilitation and Recovery?



Stroke is a growing global health issue and currently the second-leading cause of death worldwide. Alarming, “the number of people dying of stroke could increase by 50% by 2050 unless [significant improvements are made in prevention and treatment](#)” according to October, 2023 research and data.

According to 2022 statistics data from the American Heart Association, “On average in 2019, someone died of stroke every 3 minutes 30 seconds in the United States. And stroke accounted for approximately 1 of every 19 deaths.”

Stroke is also the second leading cause of disability. Disability may include loss of vision and/or speech, paralysis, and confusion.

Can Reiki play a supportive role in stroke recovery, rehabilitation and possibly contribute to prevention? Research suggests that Reiki may provide some tangible benefits for stroke patients and toward general wellness for our global ageing population.

## Adding Reiki to the Stroke Recovery Rehabilitation Process

When a stroke doesn't result in the death of the patient, it can also lead to a number of other complications, including paralysis, loss of skills, and long-term disability. After someone experiences a stroke, he or she will often need rehabilitative services, such as physical therapy, speech therapy, and more, in order to regain lost abilities. During this recovery period, adding Reiki to the treatment regimen may help improve patient outcomes and provide a number of other benefits.

## How Can Reiki Help?

Reiki may be helpful to stroke patients in a variety of ways. Some of the potential benefits of Reiki treatments for stroke patients include:

### Reduced Anxiety and Stress

Strokes are a life-changing experience. In the aftermath of this distressing event, people often feel overwhelmed and anxious. Not only do they worry that they may experience another stroke in the future, but they also feel stressed and impatient as they face months or even years of recovery. Reiki may help to reduce these negative

feelings during and after a session, allowing the client to relax and focus more energy on recovery. Reiki helps to activate the Relaxation Response which is beneficial for a stressed body and mind.

## **Improved Balance of the Mind and Emotions**

Stroke patients may experience strong emotions during recovery, both as a result of the trauma they have experienced, as well as any damage that was done to the brain's limbic system during the stroke. Receiving regular Reiki treatments may help to balance the patient's emotions and reduce mood swings.

## **Faster, More Complete Recovery**

Reiki may help assist to boost the client's immune system and natural ability to heal. This may help speed a stroke patient's recovery and improve the effectiveness of other treatments, such as physical therapy.

## **Decreased Sensations of Pain**

Rehabilitation and physical therapy can be painful for stroke patients. Muscles can become sore and tired, causing patients to feel discouraged. Reiki may help to reduce the pain experienced by patients in therapy, which leads to improved patient comfort and better compliance with the physical therapist's instructions.

## **Better Patient Outlook**

As Reiki restores a client's emotional balance, reduces stress, and boosts the immune system, the patient's outlook on his or her future may also improve.

## **Is Reiki Safe for Stroke Patients?**

Reiki is a non-invasive treatment that involves no tissue manipulation, tools, or pressure on the client's body. Because it can be performed with only light touch or no physical contact at all, Reiki is generally considered safe for stroke patients, even immediately after the stroke has occurred. In fact, some Reiki practitioners believe that Reiki will be more effective for clients who have suffered strokes if they begin treatment as soon as possible after the event. Nonetheless, stroke patients should talk to their doctor before beginning Reiki treatments to discuss if they should or can be included in their healing plan.

## **Patient Stories**

At the time of publication, there haven't been many research studies conducted with the goal of exploring the relationship between Reiki and stroke patient recovery. However, many stroke patients who have undergone Reiki sessions have reported that they found the treatment helpful. For example, one stroke patient reported that, after a stroke left her paralyzed on the left side of her body, a single Reiki treatment administered in the hospital helped her to move the fingers on her left hand for the first time since coming to the emergency room. The patient was impressed with the results of the treatment, so she continued Reiki sessions after returning home. She believes that these sessions, along with traditional rehab, led to a complete physical recovery.

Another stroke patient reported that Reiki was a helpful addition to her treatment regimen even years after her stroke. Prior to beginning Reiki sessions, the patient had participated in many other types of therapy, but she had never fully recovered from the effects of her stroke. After participating in only a few Reiki sessions, the patient reported feeling more balanced, energized, and coordinated than she had since the event occurred.

## **Reiki and Stroke Prevention**

In addition to helping stroke patients on the road to recovery, Reiki might also be helpful toward preventing strokes among people who are at high risk for developing blood clots. According to the CDC, the blood clots that cause strokes are more likely to occur among patients with heart disease, high cholesterol or diabetes. Because Reiki promotes the body's own ability to heal itself through the relaxation response, it may potentially aid in the treatment of some of the conditions that can lead to a stroke. Furthermore, since high blood pressure is another known contributor to the development of strokes, Reiki may also work toward helping to prevent this condition by reducing stress levels which may also help toward lowering a client's blood pressure. Reiki works as a complementary therapy to support your physician's medical and wellness plan. Whether a stroke patient is at home or in a medical facility for recovery, they can receive and experience the benefits of regular Reiki sessions.