

What is leisure therapy?

Leisure therapy helps people engage in leisure activities and achieve their goals for resuming leisure after stroke. There are many different forms of leisure therapy, including practising specific leisure activities, improving skills, finding ways to adapt to changes from the stroke, using community resources, or discovering new leisure activities.

Why use leisure therapy after a stroke?

After a stroke, many people have difficulty returning to leisure activities. Leisure activities are a good way to stay active, both physically and mentally. Leisure activities have many benefits on quality of life and mood. Leisure therapy is often as effective as other treatments to improve general skills after a stroke, which in turn can make it easier to do other daily activities.

Is leisure therapy effective after a stroke?

Studies on leisure therapy differ in the type of intervention they use, and how long or how often they do the leisure activity. This makes it difficult to decide whether leisure therapies are all effective. However, research shows that doing leisure therapy after a stroke can improve physical skills, cognitive skills and satisfaction with leisure. Leisure therapy is as effective as other stroke treatments (such as standard care, occupational therapy and physical activity) for emotional wellbeing, mood and ability to do activities of daily living.

Are there risks or side effects?

If your medical and rehabilitation team have cleared you to do physical rehabilitation, there are no specific risks or side effects associated with leisure therapy. However, it is important to work with a rehabilitation professional (e.g. an occupational therapist or recreational therapist), because your skills after a stroke may have changed. Your rehabilitation professional will help you do leisure activities safely, or find alternative activities that you can do safely. No studies report leisure therapy to be associated with any negative side effects.

Who provides leisure therapy?

Leisure therapy is often provided by occupational therapists or recreational therapists, but can also be provided by other people such as volunteers.

How much does it cost?

The cost of leisure therapy depends on public health or insurance policies. In Canada, costs are covered if you are receiving care in a rehabilitation setting that offers this form of treatment. If you are receiving private rehabilitation, it is important to verify that your insurance covers leisure therapy.

How long does it take?

In the studies used for this StrokEngine module, the duration and intensity of leisure therapy varied greatly. Most treatments were provided over several months; sessions were held once a week, and lasted between 30-60 minutes. In a rehabilitation setting, it is likely that leisure therapy will be tailored to suit each individual's goals and needs.

Is leisure therapy for me?

If you've had a stroke or know a relative who has had a stroke and is having difficulty with leisure activities, leisure therapy is an excellent treatment option to re-engage in activities or help discover new interests. Leisure activities benefit physical and psychological health and are a great way to stay active. Additionally, leisure therapy has been shown to provide additional benefits such as improving physical ability and skills for other types of activities.