

---

## What is Occupational Therapy?

---

Occupational Therapy consists of the physical, psychological and social assessment of the patient and from this assessment a treatment programme using appropriate activities and techniques is devised and instituted. This programme assists the patient to recover and develop competence in all aspects of daily living.

---

## How Occupational Therapy can help the Stroke patient

---

### Improvement of Physical Functioning

An Occupational Therapist (OT):

- encourages correct positioning of the patient, so that incorrect patterns of movement are not formed;
- assists the Stroke patient to regain balance in various positions;
- uses specialised techniques to facilitate movement in the affected limbs, and to encourage fine co-ordinated movement of the hand.

### Activities of Daily Living

An OT:

- is able to assist the Stroke patient to learn how to bath, dress, feed and groom him/herself independently, by using a specialised technique appropriate for the Stroke patient;
- can suggest assistive devices to enable the Stroke patient to accomplish his/her daily tasks, eg:
  - a Nelson knife for eating
  - one handed method of tying shoe-laces
  - a card holder for playing cards;
- can assist in the area of home management and suggest techniques that fit in with the patient's abilities;

- can arrange a home visit to suggest adaptations to the home to make it accessible to the Stroke patient.

### Perceptual Functioning

An OT is able to assess perceptual problems and assist the Stroke patient to overcome them. These problems can include neglect of the paralysed side, difficulty with right-left discrimination, disturbed spatial structure leading to difficulties with reading and writing, as well as dressing problems.

### Work Assessment

A Stroke patient's ability to work can be assessed by an OT, especially physical functioning and work tolerance, and can suggest the type of work that he/she is best suited for. Devices can also be prescribed to enhance the ability to work.

### Leisure Pursuits

An OT can suggest adaptations to an activity to encourage a Stroke patient to pursue a recreational activity to the best of his/her ability.

---

## Occupational Therapy hints for daily living

---

### Eating

- Use a plate with sides, eg. a soup plate, so that the food does not fall off the plate. This helps to get the food onto the spoon.
- If the plate slips around, place a damp cloth underneath it.
- If the patient initially makes a mess when eating, clean it up rather than discourage the activity. It is important that Stroke patients learn to feed themselves.

### Dressing

- The patient should get out of bed and dress every day to improve motivation.
- Always put a shirt on the affected arm first, and remove it from the unaffected side first.
- When putting on trousers, cross the affected leg over the good leg, and dress the affected leg first.
- When putting on socks, open the top of the sock by placing the thumb and first finger into the sock and open it wide. Put the big toe in first and then the rest of the foot.
- Use a shoe-horn when putting on a shoe.

### Bathing

- The stroke patient can bathe by sitting under a shower on a plastic chair.
- If a bath is used, there must be a rubber mat to prevent slipping – the patient should be ambulant before attempting to get into the bath alone.
- A washing-mitt will assist with washing.

---

## Why Occupational Therapy?

---

Occupational Therapists consider every aspect of the Stroke patient's rehabilitation, from physical functions to work preparedness. Therefore an OT plays an integral part in a Stroke patient resuming a dignified and active role in society.

---

## Availability of Occupational Therapy

---

- Most large provincial hospitals
- Private therapists – see [www.strokeaid.org.za](http://www.strokeaid.org.za) or Tel: Stroke Aid - 011 728 2292

*N.B. Referral from a doctor is required.*

---

### Become a member

---

Complete the form below, and post it together with membership fees to:  
Stroke Aid, PO Box 51283, Raedene, Johannesburg  
2124

Annual affiliation fee R40  (Not attending Paterson Park,  
living elsewhere in SA or from a neighbouring country)

Paterson Park Support Group R40  per month  
(includes coffee/tea, refreshments)

You will receive a regular newsletter of events

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Residential Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Code \_\_\_\_\_

Postal Address \_\_\_\_\_

Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: (h) \_\_\_\_\_ (b) \_\_\_\_\_

Cell: \_\_\_\_\_ e-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Referred by: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Have you suffered from a stroke? Yes/No

2. Are you a family member? Yes/No

3. Are you a professional?

Yes/No

Please state profession \_\_\_\_\_

4. Are you a volunteer? Yes/No

5. Next of kin \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Code: \_\_\_\_\_

6. Doctor: \_\_\_\_\_

Tel: (1) \_\_\_\_\_ (2) \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

---

### Specialised Equipment

---

#### Independent Living Centre

(Equipment & Information - disability discs for cars)

Tel: 011 482 5474/5

#### Rand Medical Supplies

(Incorporating left-hand shop)

Tel: 011 789 2203

---

### Further information:

---

#### Stroke Aid

PBO 930018543

Tel 011 728 2292

Fax: 086 666 8154

P O Box 51283 Raedene

Johannesburg

2124

[www.strokeaid.org.za](http://www.strokeaid.org.za)

e-mail: [info@strokeaid.org.za](mailto:info@strokeaid.org.za)



**THERE IS HOPE AFTER STROKE**



**STROKE AID**

(Johannesburg)

---

**OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY**

---

**AND THE  
STROKE PATIENT**

*Published by*

Stroke Aid

Tel 011 728 2292

Fax: 086 666 8154

P O Box 51283 Raedene

Johannesburg 2124

