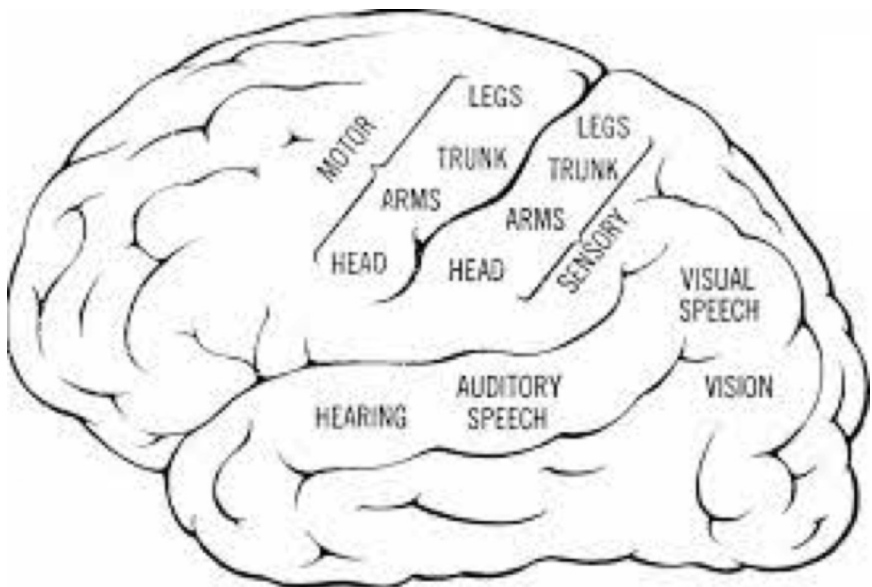




Sensory Stimulation

Information for patients
Physiotherapy



INFORMATION TO SUPPORT YOUR REHABILITATION JOURNEY

Following a stroke some people may notice problems with their sensation. This is due to an impairment in the sensory nerves which are located throughout the body. They specifically help us to see, hear, taste, smell and touch.

The consequences of disruption to these nerves can be seen when trying to perform smooth coordinated movements. They can cause difficulties with simple tasks such as standing and walking even when the muscles themselves seem to be moving normally. It is part of the brains function to help make sense of the information it receives from the sensory nerves. This in turn then helps to shape our physical and emotional responses.

For example, if we touch a very hot radiator, our sensory cells react by causing a reflex to bring our hand away from danger. When we step on a cobbled street, our visual sensors and sensory receptors in our feet alert us to a change in surface and so make preparations for the alteration in balance. Thus our brain is constantly adapting and responding to our environment.

EXERCISES FOR SENSORY STIMULATION

It is therefore important after stroke that we aim to restore as far as possible a persons sensory awareness. To do this we would recommend a sensory stimulation approach. The following page outlines some exercises and advice designed to activate the senses.

1. Practice stroking the affected limb. Do this for several minutes.
2. Vary this by stroking the limb areas with different textures such as rough, smooth, cold, hard objects: for example you could try a stone, sandpaper, cotton wool.
3. Bring your affected limb into view for example by having it positioned well where you can see it. Sometimes this may need to be in front of your body or across the middle of your body.
4. Try to have your hand or foot or limb in good contact with the supporting surface. This is especially important each time you are sitting or standing.
5. Try turning your head looking around towards your affected side. Try and find objects on that side either in the distance or in the foreground for example on the table.
6. Use electrical stimulator if deemed appropriate by your physiotherapist. They can give you more details on this.
7. Try Graded Motor Imagery – see additional Sheet.
8. Try and improve your Postural Awareness

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