

NeuroAiD NEWSLETTER



Issue 6: February 2008

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\$20 Discount !

Welcome

Welcome to **Issue 6** of NEUROAID Newsletter. Each month we bring you a slice of the work we've been doing and a general update on the happenings at Neuroaid.

Our first issues were very well received and you gave us some great feedback on what you did and didn't like reading in the newsletter. Based on this feedback we've made some changes to the content for Issue 6, and we've got another discount for you to benefit from (see above).

If you're getting security warnings from your email program or if you're having trouble seeing the images in this email, please add us to your address book (this will help the emails come through without a hitch).

How to train your working memory after a stroke?

Memory loss is something that everyone experiences at times, often increasing with age or a neurological problem such as a stroke. Working memory is what we call short-term memory; it is a key cognitive function that allows individuals to hold information "online" for short periods of time. Working memory is often affected after stroke and traumatic brain injuries resulting in problems with attention and planning. After a stroke, one of the main reasons for not being able to return to work is the cognitive problems.

While there are many therapies addressing problems with motor functions and language, there is currently no satisfactory way to treat the cognitive problems. A new study carried out by Dr. Westerberg has shown that victims of acquired brain injury can improve their attention by using a software-based program (Cogmed) to train working memory. 89% of stroke victims who participated in the training reported that after that they were less easily distracted, less likely to daydream and less likely to lose focus when reading. The study is the first of its kind to demonstrate that working memory training among stroke victims leads to improvements in daily life; yet it was performed on a too small sample to be significant and need be tested some more. Optimistic, Dr. Westerberg reported: "This study is an indication of the broad potential of working memory training. In many ways, we are only beginning to understand the tremendous impact that this kind of focused training can have on individuals suffering from various cognitive limitations." If the method is once more proved to be truly efficient, it could bring new hope to the stroke survivors who suffer severe working memory deficits that impair their executive functioning and social interaction. Working memory capacity is a fundamental cognitive ability necessary for the rehabilitation of other mental functions.

Until such techniques get widely distributed, stroke survivors can make up their own way to train their working memory. The most important step toward improving memory skills is making a conscious decision to pay attention. Then, simple techniques can help to process information, store it and retrieve it when needed. Here are some tips to train your memory: pick the one that suits you best!

Association



You can learn or recall something more easily if you associate it with something you already know or remember. To recall a specific date, associate it with another well-known date (Christmas, your birthday, etc.) To help remember names, associate the new name with a famous person or someone you already know. Associate a person's name with their physical characteristics (eyes, ears, weight, size, etc.); you don't have to tell the person about your little trick. Pair chores or tasks you might forget about with things you always remember to do. For example, if you drink tea every morning put your pills by the tea bags so you will not forget them.

Repetition and rehearsal

There is no such thing as "overlearning"; studying or reviewing the material more than you think you need to can prove very useful. Do not hesitate to repeat new information to yourself several times, spacing out these repetitions over time. If you must remember something quite long (story, map indications, etc.) break-up information into smaller pieces and learn them carefully the one after the other. Better training your memory carefully than rushing for nothing.

Compensation

"The weakest ink is stronger than the best memory", Confucius said. Old sayings are often good advice; if you want to remember something, write it down. Get yourself a comprehensive calendar in which you can write down not only things to do, but also names and contact number, medication and any further information you want to remember about. In a nutshell, make sure you have plenty of space to store valuable information.

Personal training

Challenge yourself with easy mind games to train your memory without even noticing. Take a look a picture for a couple of minutes, then hide it and try to write down all the objects on it, or try to redraw it. Start with easy pictures and gradually increase difficulty. Play memory game with your children or grand children; not only will you train your memory but you will spend good time with loved ones and for sure they will enjoy it too!

Improving memory requires awareness of the possibility of forgetting and then making a conscious effort to use some type of memory tool. Experiment with a variety of techniques and find what works for you. And more importantly, have fun!

Sources:

Working Memory:

<http://strokeassociation.org/presenter.jhtml?identifier=3027313>

<http://www.mindtools.com/memory.html>

<http://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2008/01/080107110401.htm>

<http://www.cogmed.com/cogmed/articles/en/84.aspx>

Avoiding another stroke: Exercising

Exercising is not only one of the keys to healthy life; it also helps prevent heart disease and lowers stroke risks. Indeed, inactivity is a major risk factor for developing coronary artery disease and it can also lead to high blood pressure, cholesterol and diabetes. Exercising 30 to 40 minutes at least 3 to 4 times a week reduces blood pressure, raises "good cholesterol" and helps regulate insulin requirements. Bring physical activity into your daily life!

Daily physical activity does not require a lot of time, but it benefits your body a lot. It does not mean you have to undergo intensive tough fitness programs but only get used to introducing soft activities in your daily life: chance is, you will not even notice you are exercising! Why not start by exercising at home? It allows your children to see you being active, which sets a good example for them. The best part is that you can combine exercise with other activities.

Try these tips:

- Go out for a short walk before breakfast, after dinner or both! Start with 5-10 minutes and work up to 30 minutes.
- Walk or bike to the corner store instead of driving.
- Housework is an exercise too!
- Work in the garden or mow the grass. Do not cheat: using a riding mower doesn't count! Rake leaves, prune, dig and pick up trash.
- When walking, pick up the pace from leisurely to brisk. Choose a hilly route.
- When watching TV, sit up instead of lying on the sofa. Better yet, spend a few minutes pedaling on your stationary bicycle while watching TV. Instead of asking someone to bring you a drink, get up off the couch and get it yourself.



- Stand up while talking on the telephone.
- Walk the dog and play with him.

Activities with family and friends are also a great way for you to exercise without noticing. Enjoy recreational activities and take good care of your health at the same time. Do not hesitate to look for opportunities such as these to be active and have fun at the same time:

- Plan family outings and vacations that include physical activity (strolling, hiking, swimming, etc.)
- See the sights in new cities by walking, jogging or bicycling.
- Make a date with a friend to enjoy your favorite physical activities. Do them regularly.
- Play your favorite music while exercising: that will motivate you.
- Dance with someone or by yourself. Take dancing lessons. Hit the dance floor on fast numbers instead of slow ones.
- Join a recreational club that emphasizes physical activity.
- At a picnic, join in on badminton instead of croquet.

Make up other activities that correspond to your daily life and likes and introduce easy exercising in your life! Do not hesitate to share your tips with your family and friends.

Sources:

*Avoiding another stroke: exercising Texas Heart Institute
Americanheart.org National Stroke Association*



[Our latest testimonies on NeuroAid](#)

Joyce Barlow (USA, Michigan)

Husband started NeuroAid 2 years and 2 months after stroke, and 2 months after mini stroke

" My husband had a hemorrhagic stroke in September 2005. He has since had 3 minor strokes, the last being in October 2006. He is on an abdominal feeding tube, cannot walk, balance, swallow, or speak very well. He has been on NeuroAid for one month now and has become stronger physically in that he can actually stand himself up. He speaks better, and he has amazingly improved cognitively and neurologically! He still cannot swallow, but he is now a good therapy candidate for that. He will also begin physical therapy, as he now qualifies for that as well. NeuroAid truly works - I have seen it right before my eyes.

He has become more alert and has improved cognitively. The newest development is my husband wants to "walk" and actually attempts to get up from the chair without assistance. Of course, he cannot walk without assistance at all. But the fact that he even THINKS and WANTS to walk has made his physical therapy easy. NeuroAid is the best purchase I ever made for him. Thank you NeuroAid! "

Derrell Schooley (USA, Kansas)

Mother started NeuroAid 13 months after suffering a brainstem stroke at age 61

" My mother suffered a brainstem stroke on August 1, 2006 at age 61. Her "awakening" over the next three month went from no movement at all to each limb slowly beginning to function, starting with the left arm, then left leg, then right leg, then right arm. Her level of consciousness also slowly increased. Over the first year she has been slowly recovering, but shows significant signs of right side denial and right side spasticity, along with short term memory problems. She has been going to physical, occupational and speech therapy five a week from professionals and from family. A faith in God's healing touch and the therapies are very important parts in driving the recovery.



I first heard of NeuroAid on the internet, and after connecting with other stroke survivors who had tried it and reported improvements, I decided to give it a try, even though Mom's stroke was already over a year old. In the first month we felt she was improving mainly her short term memory. After the three month treatment we stopped NeuroAid for a few weeks – at that point it became obvious the NeuroAid had been reducing the spasticity in the right side and that the same spasticity was returning. Independently, four different persons (two of her care givers, her physical therapist and myself) noticed the recurring spasticity, therefore we decided to extend her treatment for another 3 months. We continue to see progress and we are quite excited when we see now her slowly being started being able to open her left eye lid which had been closed since the stroke. We expect more and more improvement through God's healing touch and with the help of NeuroAid.

As a side note, during her first regiment with NeuroAid, she began to bleed easily, specifically in the left eye. The physicians were of course very fast to blame it on NeuroAid, since it was an "untested Chinese Herbal" with unknown side effects. As I challenged the physician (which is not uncommon) with the fact that NeuroAid had no impact on blood clotting factors, they did a little more research and found out that this was a drug interaction between Lexapro and Plavix which they had prescribed to her. "

That's all for this month!

Thank you for taking the time to read this issue of Neuroaid Newsletter - we hope you enjoyed it.

We'll be back next month with more articles about the stroke, if you feel we need to address a particular topic, please let our team know about it !

To find out more about NeuroAid, please visit our website - www.neuroaid.com



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