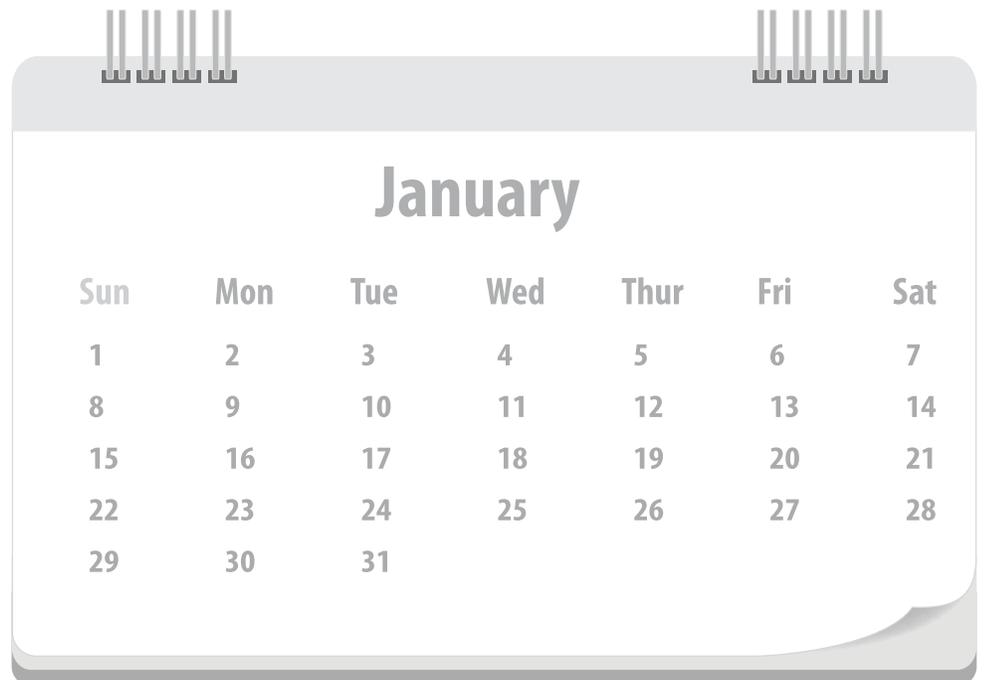


## CHAPTER 7—ADJUSTING THE ROUTINE

You and the stroke survivor can continue to do things you love; however, what was “normal life” pre-stroke is not always the same as “normal life” post-stroke. There are things you need to remember when scheduling activities and appointments. Change can be difficult, so keep in mind that recovery is a process.



**Remember, respite care may be an option to give you a break every now and then.**

Between 70 and 90 percent of stroke survivors experience some difficulty with mobility. A stroke survivor with limited mobility will require more assistance with not just walking, but personal care, getting from place to place and other daily activities. Progress is possible with perseverance and the continuation of rehab exercises at home. All activity needs to be adapted to the stroke survivor's pace.

Be creative in the ways you keep the stroke survivor's recovery moving forward:

- Outdoor or mall walking.
- Exercise videos (yoga, stretching, chair exercises).
- Computer games.
- Trips to the grocery store.

Maintaining daily activity and using adaptive tools to meet current needs will help to continue improvement. To learn more, visit [www.stroke.org/ihope](http://www.stroke.org/ihope) for information on:

- ***iHOPE: Mobility***
- ***iHOPE: Rehabilitation at Home***

## FATIGUE

Post-stroke fatigue, the “invisible symptom”, affects between 40 and 70 percent of stroke survivors. Fatigue is often confused with “being tired.” It is important to know that fatigue is not necessarily the same as tiredness, because it arrives without warning and rest does not always make it better. Fatigue can occur days, weeks, months or even years post-stroke. It occurs differently in every individual, making a person feel physically, cognitively and/or emotionally exhausted. Fatigue can greatly impact daily life and limit recovery. As caregiver, you need to be prepared to help your loved one manage their fatigue.

Fatigue can make it difficult to perform daily tasks or stay motivated. Many stroke survivors report that they feel like they’re “hitting a wall.” Communication is vital to managing fatigue—ask the stroke survivor questions and encourage them to let you know when they feel tired.

- **Physical fatigue**—Motor deficits or muscle weakness and spasms.
- **Cognitive fatigue**—Memory loss, mental exhaustion and/or difficulty focusing.
- **Emotional fatigue**—Can co-exist with mood disorders, loss of motivation.

**Many factors can influence a stroke survivor’s level of fatigue.  
Pay close attention to the stroke survivor’s:**

- Medications and medication side effects.
- Physical post-stroke symptoms such as upper limb weakness.
- Diet—Certain foods induce drowsiness.
- Sleep patterns.
- Pain.

To learn more about post-stroke fatigue, watch and listen to ***iHOPE: Fatigue*** at [www.stroke.org/ihope](http://www.stroke.org/ihope), and check out the **Managing Fatigue** fact sheet at [www.stroke.org/factsheets](http://www.stroke.org/factsheets).

### FATIGUE MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

Keep a fatigue diary to record time, places and environments when fatigue occurs. To remain active while managing fatigue, consider an activity's location, the logistics required for the activity, how much time the activity will take and the stamina needed for the activity as well as diet.

**Location**—When planning an outing with your loved one, it can be helpful to visit the location first to check accessibility. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires facilities to have accessible utilities, but some locations do not always allow for two people in the same space. When you have a stroke survivor with one-sided weakness, parking, entering the location and using the bathroom can be extremely challenging.

**Logistics**—Plan your activities around the stroke survivor's needs and abilities as much as possible. If you will be gone during medication or nap times, plan ahead and bring medications along. Make time so the stroke survivor can rest. Ask yourself: what kinds of skills/resources will be involved? What you will need to bring with you?

**Time**—Be aware of how long an activity will take. Consider your surroundings. Outside stimulation such as crowds, music and background noise can be overwhelming for a stroke survivor. It is best to do outings involving these factors for limited amounts of time.



**Stamina**—Determine what activities have the greatest impact on energy level. Try doing activities when the stroke survivor is most energetic and alert. Some people are “morning people,” and some are “night owls.”

**If you are planning to go to a restaurant, make sure the menu has choices that are not only pleasing to everyone, but also meet the stroke survivor’s nutritional needs.**

**Diet**—Eating certain energy-packed foods may reinforce the strategies above. Foods that help fight fatigue include:

- Dark chocolate.
- Pumpkin seeds.
- Red bell peppers.
- Tea.
- Walnuts.
- Watermelon.
- Wheat bran cereal.
- Whole grains.
- Yogurt.

Thinking ahead is worthwhile, yet a little overwhelming. Invite a friend along for added support. To learn more on managing post-stroke fatigue, watch and listen to ***iHOPE: Fatigue*** at [www.stroke.org/ihope](http://www.stroke.org/ihope).