

# RECOGNIZING SPASTICITY AFTER STROKE

How it may affect the **arms**  and **hands** 

## What is spasticity?

Spasticity is when muscles are hyperactive, causing stiffness, tightness, spasms, and pain. This can happen right after a stroke or not until weeks or months later.



## Clenched fist

**How it may feel:** Fingers feel clenched into a fist or claw.

**Effect on daily life:** It may be difficult to keep the hand clean.

## Bent elbow

**How it may feel:** Arm feels heavy and may feel like it is “catching.”

**Effect on daily life:** It may be tough to reach into kitchen cabinets.



## Stiff shoulder

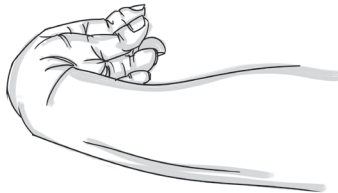
**How it may feel:** Arm feels locked tight to the chest.

**Effect on daily life:** It may be hard to stay balanced when getting up from the couch.

## Stiff forearm

**How it may feel:** Wrist and fingers feel locked tight to the chest.

**Effect on daily life:** It may be challenging to get dressed without help.



## Bent wrist

**How it may feel:** Wrist feels tightly locked.

**Effect on daily life:** It may be hard to move or pick up objects when eating.

If any of these signs show up, talk to a doctor to learn about treatment options.

**TO LEARN** more about spasticity after stroke, visit [Passport2Progress.com/Spasticity](https://Passport2Progress.com/Spasticity)

# RECOGNIZING SPASTICITY AFTER STROKE

How it may affect the **legs**  and feet 

## What is spasticity?

Spasticity is when muscles are hyperactive, causing stiffness, tightness, spasms, and pain. This can happen right after a stroke or not until weeks or months later.



## Stiff knee

**How it may feel:** Knee feels stiff and overextended.

**Effect on daily life:** When sitting, it may be difficult to stand up without help.



## Bent knee

**How it may feel:** Knee feels bent and tight.

**Effect on daily life:** It may be hard to swing the leg forward when walking.



## “Scissor gait” (aka adducted thigh)

**How it may feel:** Legs feel tightly crossed.

**Effect on daily life:** It may be tough to clean between the legs.



## Stiff hip

**How it may feel:** Hip feels stuck with leg in bent position.

**Effect on daily life:** Walking may become tiresome because of shorter steps.

## “Club foot” (aka equinovarus foot)

**How it may feel:** Ankle feels stiff; foot is turned downwards and in; toes feel tightly curled like a claw.

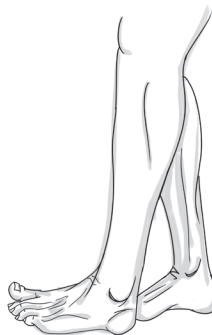
**Effect on daily life:** It may be difficult to keep steady while standing.



## “Hitchhiker’s toe” (aka striatal toe)

**How it may feel:** Big toe feels stuck sticking up; cramping and pain may be present.

**Effect on daily life:** It may be tricky to put on shoes and socks when dressing.



If any of these signs show up, talk to a doctor to learn about treatment options.

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