

Brain injury recovery: Debunking myths about the “recovery plateau”

Recovery is not a straight line: There are ups and downs and a plateau may occur, but that doesn't mean recovery stops!

The first weeks after brain injury are called **spontaneous recovery**; when your brain is first healing from initial trauma. Physical, cognitive, or speech difficulties can improve more quickly at this time.

But then the rate of recovery may slow down and this is where the myth of a “recovery plateau” originated. Like a mountain plateau which is flat at the top, it used to be thought that when recovery also flattens, you've stopped improving permanently.

But this just isn't true! Neuroplasticity will eventually kick in - when your brain re-learns lost skills. The key is to actively work on those lost skills to harness the power of neuroplasticity. Practice targeted, specific exercises consistently.

Feel stuck? Here are 4 ideas to re-start recovery:

1. **Change your goal or make a new one.** If you've been working on the same thing for a long time, try changing things up and working on something different.
2. **Try a new kind of activity.** Incorporate the skills you're practicing by doing a new hobby or volunteering - you'll be working on those skills in a different way.
3. **Join a group or social network for your specific injury.** Connect with others and learn how they've dealt with plateaus.
4. **Take a break to recharge.** Rest is an essential part of recovery and re-learning lost skills. If you're feeling burnt out, it's ok to take a break from practicing.

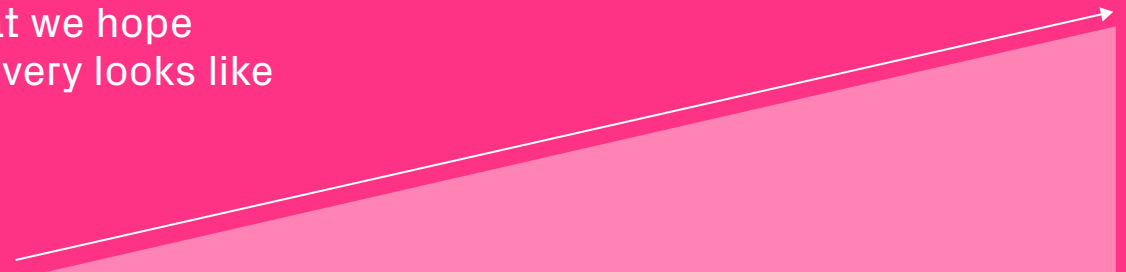
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What we hope
recovery looks like



What it feels like
when we're stuck



What recovery
actually looks like



Never give up! Science shows that even patients who are many years post-brain injury still can make improvements.

