

Somatosensory Rehabilitation

What is somatosensory rehab?

Somatosensory function is the ability to feel different body sensations like touch, vibration, pressure and textures, understanding where your body is in space (proprioception) and identifying objects. People with somatosensory challenges may have numbness, pain, incoordination and limited hand use. They might notice their hand 'feels different'.

Somatosensory rehabilitation (rehab) is a type of therapy which aims to improve the loss of these different body sensations. Occupational therapists are trained in somatosensory rehab.

Research tells us somatosensory rehab helps people get back to meaningful tasks such as getting dressed, meal preparation, or being able to pay for items. This could help you to do more tasks with less assistance.

Who can somatosensory rehab help?

- People who have had a stroke
- People living with a brain injury
- People who have conditions or disabilities which lead to difficulties with upper limb function, such as multiple sclerosis, multiple systems atrophy, cerebral palsy, and Parkinson's disease.

If you are not sure if somatosensory rehab is appropriate for your condition, ask your occupational therapist.



What to expect from your session

Assessment

Your occupational therapist will start your somatosensory rehab program by assessing your somatosensory system. They will figure out what is working well and what is not working well, so they can plan a program to help you.

Your occupational therapist may also ask you questions about everyday tasks you find challenging to see if any of these difficulties are related to the issues with your senses.

Personalised program

A personalised program will be prescribed to improve your somatosensory system.

Somatosensory therapy

Your occupational therapist will then guide you through tasks to practise. Therapy will address the element of sensation that is being targeted, such as touch, temperature or proprioception. A home exercise program may be prescribed to keep therapy going between sessions.

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