



After a stroke, damage to the brain can block messages between muscles and the brain causing arm and leg muscles to cramp or spasm (spasticity), kind of like a bad charley horse. This will limit your coordination and muscle movement. This post-stroke condition makes daily activities such as bathing, eating and dressing more difficult. Spasticity can cause long periods of strong contractions in major muscle groups, causing painful muscle spasms. These spasms can produce:

- **A tight fist**
- **Bent elbow**
- **Arm pressed against the chest**
- **Stiff knee**
- **Pointed foot**

FYI, I've recently learned from the book, *Stronger After Stroke* by Peter G Levine, that spasticity actually begins in the spinal column, not the brain. The spine sends an alert to the brain, "this appendage has been damaged, so we need to protect it and keep it safe!"

[CLICK HERE FOR THE BOOK!](#)



Tips for managing Spasticity:

Managing spasticity with assistive devices, aids and home adaptations can help ensure your safety and reduce the risk of spasticity-related falls. Physical and occupational therapists will recommend the appropriate aid(s) as well as safety procedures, maintenance and proper fit.

Some modifications in your home to improve safety include:

- Ramps**
- Grab bars**
- Raised toilet seats**
- Shower or tub bench**
- Plastic adhesive strips on the bottom of the bathtub**
- Braces, canes, walkers and wheelchairs may help you move about freely as you gain strength.**

Always follow rehabilitation therapists' recommendations regarding limitations and safety needs.