

# Arm's Reach

## Occupational Therapy



### Mirror Therapy Information Sheet

**Contact: 07305453000**

**Email: [info@armsreach-ot.co.uk](mailto:info@armsreach-ot.co.uk)**

**[www.armsreach-ot.co.uk](http://www.armsreach-ot.co.uk)**

## What Is Mirror Therapy?

Mirror Therapy is a therapy approach used to increase movement, in an affected hand or arm, after neurological injury. The person sits with both arms on a table, one on either side of a mirror box. Their affected arm is hidden from view. The reflection in the mirror shows an image of their 'stronger' arm. When looked at long enough, their brain begins to believe the image is actually their affected arm. Daily exercises are carried out, using everyday objects whilst the person concentrates on the mirror image.

## How Does Mirror Therapy Work?

In Mirror Therapy, we use movements of the stronger hand and arm to "trick our brain" into thinking that the affected arm is moving. Some recent research reports, observing movement in this way stimulates damaged areas of the brain responsible for movement of the affected arm. The hypothesis is that these stimulated areas may generate new neural connections around the damaged area of the brain. Mirror Therapy can be useful for people who find even small arm movements difficult.

## What Does The Research Say?

A 2018 review of 62 high quality studies concluded that Mirror Therapy after stroke improves motor function and the ability to carry out daily activities. There are variations in the research e.g how frequent Mirror Therapy should be used; how long it should last for; the severity of stroke it should be used for. Although the research is recent, there is currently an overall 'moderate' quality of evidence for the approach.

## Who is Mirror Therapy Suitable For?

Mirror Therapy is suitable for people who have a weaker arm or hand after a stroke or neurological injury. Being motivated to engage is key and the person needs to actively engage in the therapy for at least 20 minutes at once. Sessions should be regular and generally over a minimum of 4 weeks. This will therefore likely include set-up and completion of the exercises outside of therapy sessions, either independently or with the help of someone else. Mirror Therapy can also be used as an 'add-on' therapy approach to other interventions.

## About AROT

Arm's Reach Occupational Therapy (AROT) is an assessment and rehabilitation service for people living with an affected arm and hand after stroke injury. It is run by Jessamy Boydell, Occupational Therapist (MSc; MRCOT). AROT also provides treatment for other stroke-related issues. It focuses on goal-directed therapy to address the daily life challenges most meaningful to clients.

## I'm interested. How do I find out more?

Please contact Arm's Reach Occupational Therapy to learn more about whether Mirror Therapy may be suitable for you, and for information on prices:

**07305453000**

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