

Excellence in Action

Horsing Around in Therapy

A success story as told by Paul Rice, Rehab Director, in Centralia, MO



A patient was in therapy for a few weeks and not progressing well, partly due to a lack of interest and poor mood. He rode horses with his family on weekends and was starting to have difficulty mounting his horse, having to climb into the back of the truck to mount from his usual right side. Using this information, we started using horses as motivation in order to progress towards his goals of balance and strength.

We started working on lateral weight shifts that eventually turned to single limb stance, necessary for lifting his right leg up to the stirrup. Strength training for the hip flexors was incorporated to help with elevating the leg high enough as well. Glute work was included also to provide the proper hip extension necessary to lift his body weight up and over the saddle.

I brought my grandfather's saddle from home and placed it on a large stability ball for seated balance training. His interest and participation in therapy instantly improved, and so did his mood. His son reported back that he sits on the horse really well now and has a much easier time mounting the saddle with his right side.

As a side note, the saddle became quite a hit for the staff too. Several people came into our gym to test their balance. It ended up being a lot of fun, and we were able to achieve really positive outcomes in the process.

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Stay tuned for next month's Excellence in Action Story from more of our teams in the field!