







## **Will using equipment prevent patients from getting better?**

Despite the above-mentioned benefits, some may be reluctant to implement SPH equipment use due to the misconception that it impedes functional recovery and decreases active patient participation. However, evidence does not support this claim. In fact, SPH equipment can allow staff to mobilize patients earlier, more frequently, and for longer durations by decreasing therapist strain and fatigue as limiting factors. And using SPH equipment may allow patients to achieve higher functional gains compared to when SPH equipment is not used.<sup>8</sup> Allowing patients increased repetition and intensity of walking practice is consistent with the recommendations in the locomotor clinical practice guideline.<sup>1</sup>



## **Are there uses for an overhead harness system other than for gait training?**

While harness systems can be invaluable tools for optimally implementing High Intensity Gait Training, there are several other applications. Overhead lifts can be used for dependently transferring patients onto other exercise equipment, or to safely help them reposition in a wheelchair or bed. For patients with more function, harness systems can provide a safer way to practice squat pivot or slide board transfers. Floor based therapeutic activities including practicing floor transfers are also made safer with an overhead lift system. They can also help with supporting heavy limbs during wound and lymphedema therapies, freeing up the therapist's hands to be more precise and efficient.

## **What's the take home message?**

In summary, physical therapy clinics looking to provide evidence-based care for improving walking function for patients with neurologic injury should strongly consider the benefits of safe patient handling equipment such as overhead harness systems. Such equipment not only allows patients to receive best care, but also allows clinics to maximize safety of patients and staff, and potentially limit the financial burden of work-related injuries.

### References:

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