



Innovative Physical Therapy Treatment Ideas

In honor of PT month, we have compiled some favorite innovative treatment ideas being utilized by our PTs and PTAs across our organization. We would like to celebrate all of our innovative physical therapy practitioners by sharing their great ideas!

Enhancing Motivation

- Play your patient's favorite type of music during the session
- Sing to your patients and have them sing with you during their session
- Work towards the patient's stated goals
- Functional focused treatment avoiding repetitive exercises
- Play YouTube videos of popular old dances during treatment sessions
 - The Watusi <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OcQQi9vbZZE>
 - The Jitterbug <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3tRFL4q5m7c>

Functional Treatment Ideas

- For max A x 2 patients unable to enter the therapy gym, move dressers or night stands parallel to each other to create a stable space to complete functional tasks safely
- To simulate a car transfer, use a chair without arms and set it up near the room's door
- Turn adjusting the thermostat into a dual task activity; the patient practices adjusting temperatures in standing or while performing postural balance drills
 - For an increased challenge, patients can stand on an unstable surface

Postural Balance Training

- For golfers, integrate golfing into balance training
 - Set up a coffee mug and used a putter to put golf balls into the cup
 - Practice swinging a golf club, make sure there is enough space
- Use the app Clock Yourself for a dual task training activity; it creates patterns for stepping on a clock using visual and verbal commands
- For gardeners, create a "mock" garden with what you have in your gym and turn it into a postural balance activity by having the patient perform simulated gardening tasks
 - Example: kneel on a foam pad and reach for the "flowers" in different directions
- Make a large "+" with tape on the floor and in each square, write numbers 1-4
 - Patient stands at the bottom and the therapist instructs verbally the foot and number to hop onto each number in the sequence called.
 - Variation: Patient taps their foot into the squares in the desired sequence



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- Integrate balance pad activities to challenge ankle and hip strategies
 - Have your patient close their eyes to identify vestibular issues
- Help reduce falls by integrating reciprocal movements and crossing midline activities.
- For patients having difficulty with weight shifting, perform standing weight-shifting activities with 1-2 gait belts circled around the pelvises of the patient and therapist
 - The therapist can use their own body weight to facilitate weight shifting.

Gait Training

- Use a metronome to help cadence and gait speed with gait training and agility drills
- Use an elastic band to assist with gait training (ankle dorsiflexion and knee flexion) in CVA patients to facilitate swing phase of gait
- "Infinity Walk," a figure eight pattern around cones or chairs to address weight shifting, righting reaction, balance, assistive device management and motor planning
- Obstacle negotiation to improve safety and balance for return home
- Multidirectional gait training on treadmill or on ground

Manual Therapy

- Use active release techniques, stretching, distraction and soft tissue release techniques to improve pain and flexibility
- Use lymphatic massage, compression and elevation to assist with edema reduction

Strengthening

- Use a step stool for functional strengthening: step-ups, lateral step-ups, and step-overs
- Double leg squats with ball or towel roll squeeze to increase VMO activity
- Use Pilates technique "the Hundred" to increase core strength and activity tolerance
- Incorporate core strengthening with LE strengthening (example: chair sit ups)

Respiratory Training

- For COVID-19 patients or anyone at risk of developing pneumonia, have the patient complete breathing exercises such as exhaling with force onto paper/napkin to increase lung capacity
- Add out loud counting when performing strengthening exercises to increase lung capacity and prevent the development of pneumonia