

Supporting Adult Riders with Physical Disabilities

All physical disabilities will present differently but some common characteristics include: muscle weakness, abnormal muscle tone, poor motor planning, balance, or coordination, altered sensation and increased fatigue



The Efficacy of Equine-Assisted Activities and Therapies on Improving Physical function

Short and long term physical improvements particularly after consistent sessions one or more times a week. Benefits included improvements in gross motor function (e.g. walking, running, jumping), spasticity, muscle symmetry, posture, balance, and gait occur in adults and children with varying disabilities. Long-term cardiac benefits were not evident.

Rigby BR, Grandjean PW. The Efficacy of Equine-Assisted Activities and Therapies on Improving Physical Function. J Altern Complement Med. 2016 Jan;22(1):9-24. doi: 10.1089/acm.2015.0171. Epub 2015 Dec 14. PMID: 26654868.



Mounting/Transfer Techniques

- Bend at the knees not at the back
- Staggered stance with your feet
- Use clear simple commands
- Ensure all members of the team understand their role
- **S**upport **P**roximally, **C**ontrol **D**istally

Precautions	Contraindications
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abnormal tone or weakness may impair a person's ability to position themselves on a horse • Joint laxity, spinal curvature/fusion could limit adequate mobility • Fatigue, weather extremes, high-energy equine movement • Medical devices: staff training, device protection, equine tolerance, emergency plan • Decreased sensation, skin integrity risk, & impaired temperature regulation • Spinal Cord Injury below T6 only; monitor skin, posture, and endurance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inability to sit upright or control head/neck against gravity • Strong extensor thrust or inability to position legs on equine • Worsening pain, neurologic symptoms, or spinal deformity, including a tethered cord • Medical Devices: unsafe device malfunction risk or staff safety concerns • Atlantoaxial instability • Complete SCI above T6 • Persistent or function-limiting fatigue

Notes: _____
