

Rocking Therapy Research SUMMARY



When first introduced to the concept of Rocking Therapy, people rarely question the idea; it is as if they had known it all along. Medical research, therapist insight, personal accounts and historical references give support.

Alzheimer's, Dementia Relief & Healthy Seniors

Research from the Columbia Hospital in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, resulted in an article in the "American Journal of Sports Medicine", March-April 1989 titled "Seniors Rocking to Good Health" detailing the benefits of rocking to older Americans. It is good for the mind, body and spirit and even can help those with an otherwise sedentary lifestyle to achieve muscle tone through the manageable, non-weight bearing exercise of rocking.

Later, studies at the University of Rochester, New York, using Rocking Chair Therapy with Alzheimer and Dementia patients, showed that seniors could literally rock away their anxiety and depression.

The patients required less medication and their balance improved as well. Further benefits included a happier nursing home staff.

Families of rocking seniors were happier because their loved ones were happier. This research showed that one intervention (rocking) produced six benefits, and effected positive change in many people.

Arthritis

"Arthritis Today", the magazine of the Arthritis Foundation, suggests "rock the night away." The article continues: "Sit in a rocking chair while watching TV or reading, and just rock. Rocking is relaxing and it can improve strength and flexibility- especially in your knees."

Attention Deficit Disorders - ADD & ADHD

Rocking Chair Therapy is helping students with ADD and ADHD to better adapt and focus in the learning environment. It seems the motion of the rocking chair can accommodate the need to keep moving while these students are studying, listening, etc.



Autism

The ARI (Autism Research Institute), in recent years has seen an increase in interest of Sensory Integration Therapy for autistic adults and children. In treatment evaluation questionnaires that were administered, parents give sensory integration a very high percentage of 69% approval, with the highest of 47 therapies being Behavior Modification at 83%. Impressive.

Back Pain

The story and photographs of President John F. Kennedy rocking are known to most people. His doctor had prescribed rocking for his chronic back pain. Research shows that the spinal cord can only work in one direction at a time, thus, when the brain is sending motor impulses down the spinal cord to make the legs rock the chair, pain impulses from the back are blocked, and are prevented from reaching the brain which lets the muscles in the lower back relax and heal.

Knee Replacement Surgery

Orthopedic surgeons have long recommended rocking for those who are recuperating from knee replacement surgery.

Post-Operative Recovery & "Speed Healing"

Studies conducted at the Medical College of Virginia have shown that 'kinetic therapy' (the constant, gentle motion rocking in a rocking chair) can dramatically speed healing in severely ill patients. Dr. Heinrich Addleheim of the Kinetic Therapy Clinic states that with regular rocking, "the body settles into a natural rhythm that harnesses incredible powers of recuperation and regeneration. We've seen cases of patients recuperating from heart attack and strokes without any trace of permanent damage simply because they rocked while they were recovering. I've seen people bedridden with arthritis who were up and around inside a week after regular rocking. It can be used to cure colds, flu, diabetes and even some types of cancer. It's not just a piece of furniture; it's a remarkable medical device."

Post-Op Recovery in Pediatric Patients

The British Columbia Children's Hospital of Vancouver, Canada, uses kinesthetic methods including Rocking Chair Therapy for post operative relief from acute, painful medical procedures. "This pain reduction technique is synergistic with analgesics and has long term benefits for pediatric patients."

Post-Op Ileus Recovery

Ileus is a condition in which there is an absence of muscular contractions of the intestine which normally move the food through the digestive system and can result in an intestinal obstruction. The article from the Vancouver hospital suggested the use of rocking in recovery of gas inducing surgeries. This report prompted Robert Massey (University of Texas M.D. Anderson Cancer Center, Houston) to write his PhD. dissertation on the effects of rocking on post operative Ileus Duration (return of bowel function), subjective pain and time to discharge following cancer related abdominal surgery. His findings showed post operative Ileus function returned 16.8 hours earlier than normal recoveries. In most hospital settings that could shorten the hospital stay by one day!

Sensory Integration (SI)

SI is the ability to take in information through your physical senses (touch, movement, smell, taste, vision, and hearing) and process it together with prior information (stored) and make a meaningful response.

Sensory Integrative Dysfunction (SID)

SID is a disorder in which the sensory output is not integrated or organized appropriately in the brain. Main symptoms of SID look like symptoms of other disabilities that include Fragile X, ADHD, ADD, Autism, Pervasive Development Disorder (PDD), and Tourette Syndrome.

Sensory Integration Therapy (SIT)

SIT is one approach used by therapists as part of a comprehensive and individualized intervention program. Its principles have been recommended for and applied to autism learning disabilities, attention problems, and developmental problems such as Fragile X. Rocking is one of the calming activities that are recommended. Sensory integration intervention is based on a neurophysiological view of autism. The late A. Jean Ayres, Ph.D. of the U.S. developed the theory and practice of sensory integration. She believed every autistic child should rock.

Fragile X

Fragile X is a family of genetic conditions which impacts individuals and families in different ways. Fragile X Syndrome is the most common form of inherited mental impairment and is sometimes referred to as Mental Retardation. Sensory impairment or sensory processing difficulties are often a part of the puzzle. Rocking is a recommended part of therapy, cited for its calming effects. In Sept. of 2006, The American Library Association offered a workshop at their annual conference entitled "Welcoming Special Needs Children at Your Library". Lindsey Biel, OCR/L, presenter and co-author of Raising a Sensory Smart Child, suggests using rocking for its soothing and repetitive motion for children with a range of disorders.

Vestibular Function

The vestibular system helps the body maintain its "postural equilibrium". It relates to or effects the perception of body position and movement and is essential in coordinating the position of the head and movement of the eyes. The vestibular system resides in the inner ear.



WhisperGLIDE is a Quiet Caregiver.

Edited from: www.rockingchairtherapy.com
For complete list of research on disorders, see www.rockingchairtherapy.com/research.html
See also: www.livestrong.com
"What Are the Benefits of a Rocking Chair?"

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