



## Meet The Equicizer!

### Introduction Guide For Equine Assisted Therapies



"Hi, I am an Equicizer. I am a mechanical horse that operates on springs. There are no buttons to push or motor to turn on. Your body makes me move! You can make me stop or go anytime you want!"

Equine assisted services use me for evaluations, warmups, stretching, building up core strength, balance, reducing anxieties, fear issues, and so much more! I am a tool for your toolbox for equine assisted therapies that include PT, OT, & SLP.

This pamphlet is here to offer some basic ideas to help get you started!"

*Let's see what we can do together!*



### Getting To Know Some of the Basics

1. You can saddle and mount me just like you would any horse. I can be ridden by a small child or even handle the weight of two adults at the same time! You can ride me bareback, with a bareback pad, vaulting surcingle, English, or Western saddle. If using the stirrup to mount me, make sure the girth is tight, just like a real horse!
2. For me to move effectively at my best, your client's hips should be right in the middle of my back. If you are riding tandemly with a client, try and find the best balance point for you both so that my body is starting out level and not pitched too forward or back.
3. If you have a client that is not able to make me move on his/her own, place your hand on my muzzle or my neck and you can easily create and control how much I move!
4. One of my favorite things to do is warm-up and stretch the client to get ready for his/her appointment. We can even practice new positions, two-point, side sitting, sitting backwards, quadruped, kneeling,  $\frac{1}{2}$  kneeling, standing, and review goals. Lots of things! And if the client wants to practice grooming skills, he/she can brush and groom me just like a real horse. I can help build confidence for the real horses!



### About the Contributing Writer Debbie Mogor



*Debbie Mogor here with famed QH "Goodie" is the EAS Coordinator for CSU at Temple Grandin Equine Center, Denver Colorado.*

Debbie is a Physical Therapist Assistant who has completed the level II Hippotherapy Principles through AHA, is a PATH int. Certified Therapeutic Riding Instructor, and Registered Therapist. She has performed Equine Assisted Physical Therapy for over 12 years, helping to build new programs including the Colorado State University Temple Grandin Equine Center.

She has worked in many Physical Therapy settings, including Skilled Nursing and Assisted Living Facilities and Home Health with adults and children. Debbie found her niche in life with Equine Assisted Services, combining her passion of helping people improve their physical abilities while working with horses.

"I've had the opportunity to witness first-hand how the Equicizer can benefit clients by improving strength, balance, endurance, and coordination. Many of our clients have had the opportunity to use the Equicizer at one time or another to reduce fear or anxiety of the first time on a live horse, helping to stretch prior to mounting a live horse, or to perform higher level positions prior to performing them on a live horse. Frankie Lovato has been a joy to work with and has been extremely helpful throughout the entire process from ordering our Equicizer to offering suggestions regarding innovative uses. I highly recommend this therapy tool for all Equine Assisted Services facilities!"



**TEMPLE GRANDIN  
EQUINE CENTER**  
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## Here are some basic ideas you can use the Equicizer for!



**Evaluations** - Use the Equicizer as an evaluation tool for your client to get a good assessment of head, neck and trunk control, balance, core strength, coordination, spasticity, sequencing, impulsiveness, and following directions.



**Target Specific Muscle Groups**- You can target specific core muscle groups simply by having your client sitting facing forwards, backwards or side sitting on the Equicizer. This can be especially beneficial to help improve transfers for someone who uses a wheelchair.



**Developmental Sequence**- By placing clients in different positions on the Equicizer, you can go through the entire Developmental Sequence (supine, prone, quadruped, tall kneeling, half kneeling, and standing) while static or dynamic, separately or in sequence. This can improve functional goals such as returning to standing position if your client suffers from falls during independent gait activities.



**Challenge Your Client**- Vaulting positions, such as  $\frac{1}{2}$  flag and full flag, will improve overall core strength and encouraging proprioception through nearly every muscle and joint in their body. Because the Equicizer is not as tall as your average horse, it's easier to assist your client if needed with positioning, manipulation, facilitation or approximation.



**Fine Motor Skills on a Clean Surface**- The Equicizer can be placed on a smooth, clean surface; great for performing fine motor and cognitive skills like lacing, buttoning, drawing, and counting coins since there is no arena dirt to lose your therapy tools.

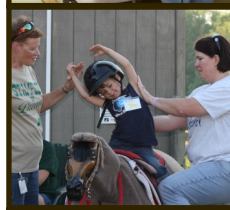
**Tandem Riding**- Sit tandem with clients who may not have the head and neck control needed to support their head. Muscle facilitation and approximation can be done while directly behind the client, improving the therapist's body mechanics. The Equicizer has a weight limit of up to 300+ lbs.

**Improve Balance**- Just as on a live horse, you can help to improve your clients prepared or reactive responses to movement. By having them rock their pelvis to move the Equicizer or move the Equicizer with your own touch you can stimulate a prepared or reactive response, improving balance and decreasing fall risk.

**Stretch**- Prior to mounting a live horse a client might benefit from 5-10 minutes on the Equicizer to help stretch tight hip adductor muscles making mounting a more pleasant experience for all. This would be especially helpful to clients with MS and CP.

**Core strengthening**- Using "side walkers" just as you would while mounted on a live horse, clients may lay across the Equicizer in the prone position and perform a "Superman" pose, strengthening spinal extensors. Clients may also lay across the Equicizer in supine (with support from the side walkers) and perform sit ups to strengthen anterior abdominal muscles. More fun than working out in a gym!

**Standing Balance**- Double and single leg stance while static and dynamic will improve gait activities. This position can help improve balance for higher level functional activities such as skateboarding, skiing or snowboarding, or even just navigating an escalator at a dept. store. (Not recommended for anyone over 4 feet tall.)



## Options and Imagination!



**Handy Alternative**- Dealing with that unexpected lameness, client fear/apprehension, severe allergies, and weather, the Equicizer would be a good alternative to keep your appointment and client going!

**Limitless Possibilities**- These are just a few suggestions. Please follow all safety protocols as if you were using a live horse. The Equicizer offers a safe addition to Equine Assisted Services with endless possibilities limited only by your imagination!

Special thank you to Debbie Mogor & the Temple Grandin Equine Center for this helpful information and introduction with using the Equicizer in Equine assisted therapies!



We invite you to join our Facebook group [Equicizer Therapy](https://www.facebook.com/groups/EquicizerTherapy). A place for learning and sharing!  
<http://facebook.com/groups/EquicizerTherapy>