

Eli's Rehab Report

News Briefs: Use 'Wii-Habilitation' To Make Therapy Fun Again

While therapists enjoy their therapy sessions, many patients quickly become bored with the same routines -- and as soon as boredom sets in, apathy is right around the corner. But rehabilitation experts at Shore Memorial Hospital in New Jersey are taking advantage of a popular gaming system -- the Wii -- to put the fun and energy back into physical rehab, reported local NBC news affiliate WMGM channel 40 on Aug. 4.

How it works: Rather than focus on traditional therapy routines, PTs have their patients play one of the many interactive, low-impact games offered for the Wii system, including downhill skiing and jumping, balance and endurance tests, and side-to-side activities, explained **Jennifer Brooks**, a therapist with Shore Memorial.

"This is a great way to motivate and distract [patients] from how much work they're actually doing. We use the Wii as just another tool a physical therapist can choose to use for almost any of our basic patient population," Brooks told the channel.

As the patients have fun, they are improving their perception, balance, and range of motion.

Action plan: Introducing 'Wii-habilitation' into your therapy routines is a great way to keep patients motivated and compliant with the plan of care, but you'll need to make sure their physicians give the all clear. And you'll want to start slowly so that patients can build up their endurance levels and truly make the most of this type of therapy.