



DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
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In reply refer to:

Anti-Gravity Treadmill Makes Therapy “A Walk on the Moon”

PALO ALTO, Calif., December 29, 2009 - The large screen waiting for input and Veteran Jesse Whitmier zipping himself into a huge air pouch will make you think you are in a NASA lab, watching astronauts train for the next launch. Coming back down to earth, you will realize this is the Outpatient Physical Therapy gym at the VA Palo Alto hospital. The \$75,000 AlterG anti-gravity treadmill is the newest addition to VA physical therapy treatment that reduces amount of body weight on the patient’s knees by using air to “lift” their body.

“Most of my patients use it,” said Lemmer Bustamante, a physical therapist in the VA Palo Alto Health Care System PM&R Service. “If we didn’t have the AlterG, it would be hard for my patients to even use treadmills after operations on their knees or hip.”

The high-tech machine is a prototype developed by the VA Palo Alto rehabilitation research and development center in collaboration with NASA and AlterG. The Anti-Gravity Treadmill uses a unique differential air pressure technology allowing the patient to feel as if they are “walking on the moon” by reducing the pressure of their body weight. The touch screen interface allows the therapist or patient to control the speed of the treadmill in addition to controlling the amount of their body weight utilized to maintain a comfortable workout.

“The AlterG treadmill allows me to do things I can’t naturally do anymore,” said Jesse Whitmier, a retired USAF Sergeant who recently underwent surgery. “I can continue to run like I did when I did track and field and even keep my weight down without pain in my knees.”

Even though the machine has only been in the gym for seven months, Bustamante has seen much faster progress in his patients after using the Anti-Gravity Treadmill.

“Previously we used a pool treadmill, but the problem is you can’t control the weight bearing,” said Bustamante.

AlterG Anti-Gravity Treadmill® is the first FDA-cleared medical device of its kind and is used by major medical centers, leading physical therapy clinics and professional, collegiate, and individual sports and fitness programs. AlterG, a company located Fremont, CA was co-founded by Chief Technical Officer Sean Whalen. Partnerships include Woodway treadmills, Nike and NASA/Ames.

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