

Wiihabilitation for Ohio Veterans

The Nintendo Wii (pronounced “we”) game is fast becoming a tool used in rehabilitation in many medical centers and hospitals across the country.

Victims of stroke, spinal cord injuries and others have been benefiting from the Wii Sports games to help them recover and regain balance, co-ordination, strength and motion.

“The Wii gets them moving. It’s also great for motivating sensory stimulation. And best of all, they really enjoy it,” Donna Holtzinger said, activity director for the McLean County Nursing Home.

Nintendo Co. does not market Wii’s potential use in physical therapy, but company representative Anka Dolecki said, “We are happy to see that people are finding added benefit in rehabilitation.”

The Hines Veterans Affairs Hospital west of Chicago recently bought a Wii system for its spinal cord injury unit.

Pfc. Matthew Turpen, 22, paralyzed from the chest down in a car accident last year while stationed in Germany, plays Wii golf and bowling from his wheelchair at Hines. Turpen says the games help beat the monotony of rehab and seem to be doing his body good, too.

“A lot of guys don’t have full finger function so it definitely helps being able to work on using your fingers more and figuring out different ways to use your hands and arms”, Turpen said.

At Walter Reed Army Medical Center, the therapy is well-suited to patients injured during combat in Iraq, who tend to be in

the 19 to 25 age range — a group that’s “very into” playing video games, said Lt. Col. Stephanie Daugherty, Walter Reed’s Chief of Occupational Therapy.

“They think it’s for entertainment, but we know it’s for therapy,” she said.

It is useful in occupational therapy, which helps patients relearn daily living skills including brushing teeth, combing hair and fastening clothes, Daugherty said.

Source: The Associated Press

Doctor’s Orders—Play video games

Army Spc. Shawn Roberts must play video games.

It’s doctor’s orders.

Every week he goes to Landstuhl Regional Medical Center (Germany) and plays games on the Nintendo Wii to help him recover from injuries sustained in a vehicle accident in Kuwait last April.

The Army hospital is experimenting using the popular video game console as a physical



therapy tool for wounded service members. Playing the game makes the often painful and boring therapy session fun, Roberts says.

The alternative is squeezing a ball of putty.

“I wasn’t expecting much out of it,” said Roberts after using the game. “You know, it’s a video game. How much could it really do? But you don’t notice it while you’re doing it because your mind’s on the game. But then when you’re done? I was sore.”

Military occupational therapists came up with the idea of using the video game before the system debuted on store shelves last year. Unlike other home video game systems, Wii (pronounced “we”) uses motion-sensing controllers.

Therapists see the game benefiting patients with nearly any kind of injury, including patients with traumatic brain injuries. The department plans to analyze the results of using the game and would like to purchase its own game console, if possible.

Source: Stars and Stripes

Commander Project Goals:

I would like to place three Wii consoles and controllers at each of the Ohio Veterans Homes and VA Facilities within Ohio. Each unit cost \$450 including extra controller, games, and extended service agreement. Once this goal is reached, the remaining funds raised through this project will be donated to the Fisher House to assist in the rehabilitation and support of our injured troops and their families returning home.

Thank you
David T. Strittmather
Commander
Sons of AMVETS
Department of Ohio

**Commander
David T. Strittmather
Project Donation**

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Please write "Commander's Project" on the memo line of your check
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My hope is that Wii games will provide an entertaining diversion during rehabilitation sessions. This will make it a little easier for Veterans to complete their therapy while at the same time improving their lives. After all, this is what the Sons of AMVETS do!

David T. Strittmather
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 Sons of AMVETS
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Wii-hab for Ohio Veterans



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