

Rehabilitation of Spinal Cord Injuries

A spinal cord injury is a life changing event that affects how you see the world figuratively as well as literally. In most cases the person will find themselves reliant on an assistive device for mobility, such as a wheelchair, crutches or a walker. Mundane tasks such as getting up and ready for the day take on a significant level of difficulty that did not previously exist. Psychosocially your self-perception and the way others view you is instantly changed. Social roles change as the patient becomes reliant on friends and family to now act as caregivers and aids in addition to their previous roles. I have seen though that with these changes comes opportunity that previously did not exist.

Rehabilitation following a spinal cord injury is very difficult and requires a lot of hard work. The purpose of all this work is to allow the patient to live a life that is meaningful and brings fulfillment.

Our approach to rehab is based on a functional task oriented method. Interventions are selected based on a specific



task that is meaningful to the individual. In this way the patient and therapist work together to design a rehabilitation plan that is motivating and engaging to the patient. A meaningful task oriented approach to rehabilitation is crucial to maximizing neuroplasticity or reorganization of the neural connections in our central nervous system. Our brain and spinal cord are organized by a complex network of nerves and have the ability to form new connections as we learn and age throughout life. For example when someone experiences a stroke the nerves around the damaged cells can reorganize to an extent to either completely or partially function in place of the damaged nerves. The spinal cord is capable of neuroplasticity, to a limited extent, and interventions are designed to maximize this.

Using interventions such as transfer skills, mobility training, and strength training, the therapist designs a treatment program and progression plan. The goal is that program will be meaningful, challenging, and novel yet still allowing for the person to be successful in accomplishing the task to maximize confidence and creating a positive therapeutic environment.

Please contact the therapists at Primary Therapy Source to find out how we can assist you in reaching your rehabilitation goals.

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