

# Patients with paralysis and neurological disabilities get support from Biomed FreeStep SAS at Project Walk - Claremont

## Project Walk - Claremont



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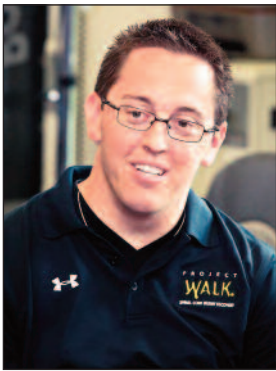
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"Project Walk encourages the possibility of recovery."

## Project Walk Claremont



Hal Hargrave Jr., Owner Project Walk - Claremont

Using exercise to move science, Project Walk Paralysis Recovery Centers, the world leader in paralysis recovery, provides an improved quality of life for people with disabilities through intense activity-based recovery programs, education, training, research and development. Certified Recovery Specialists provide tens of thousands of client treatment hours each year

with amazing results. It is this knowledge and experience that makes the program unlike any other recovery center in the world.

Project Walk - Claremont is the first ever Project Walk franchise in the state of California. Located within The Claremont Club, the facility allows clients the same experience and quality treatment as Project Walk headquarters in Carlsbad, California. As an added feature, clients enrolled in the Claremont center have use of The Claremont Club, a world class, multi-use athletic, aquatic, tennis and social facility located on 18 acres.

The franchise is owned by Hal Hargrave Jr. and is a collaborative effort between the Be Perfect Foundation, Project Walk and The Claremont Club.

Hal Hargrave Jr., Owner Project Walk - Claremont  
Hal conceived the idea of opening a Project Walk franchise in Claremont after he sustained an injury in 2007 due to an automobile accident right after graduating high school.

His first step in helping people with similar injuries came shortly after his accident when he started the nonprofit organization, "Be Perfect Foundation." The organization raises money to assist paralysis patients with medical expenses. Since its inception the foundation has raised nearly \$3 million.

During Hal's rehabilitation process he was commuting three days a week to Carlsbad for training at Project Walk. "I recognized the fact that not everyone was able to travel to the Carlsbad Project Walk location due to transportation and monetary constraints, in particular, those located in the inland Empire and Los Angeles areas", recalls Hal. "It was at that time I conferred with my parents and decided to open a franchise in Claremont at a gym I worked out at and a place I considered home for most of my childhood, The Claremont Club."

Project Walk - Claremont opened in February 2013. Currently a 5100 sq. ft. facility, the Claremont location provides services to more than 60 clients living with paralysis and neurological type disabilities ranging from: spinal cord Injury, brain Injuries, multiple sclerosis, Parkinson's, cerebral palsy, stroke, and ALS. The facility is growing rapidly and is already in need of a second expansion.

Hal continues to advance his personal growth as well. At 25 he is currently a student at the University of La Verne where he will graduate with a communications degree with an emphasis on sports broadcasting. "My goal in opening Project Walk in Claremont is to help individuals with injuries similar to mine, gain confidence and the physical ability to continue pursuing their goals."



### **The Project Walk Philosophy**

Project Walk attracts clients through word of mouth and proven results. Project Walk does not guarantee who will regain function; however, the trainers understand and recognize symptoms that present the potential to improve function below the level of injury. They do not offer false hope and give people the wrong impression by telling them they are going to walk by being in the program. Clients are informed that they are going to become healthy and reduce their chance of secondary complications.

### **The Program**

Project Walk provides a service that is invaluable and hard to find. A client's potential is tapped into through a world-renowned, activity-based recovery program.

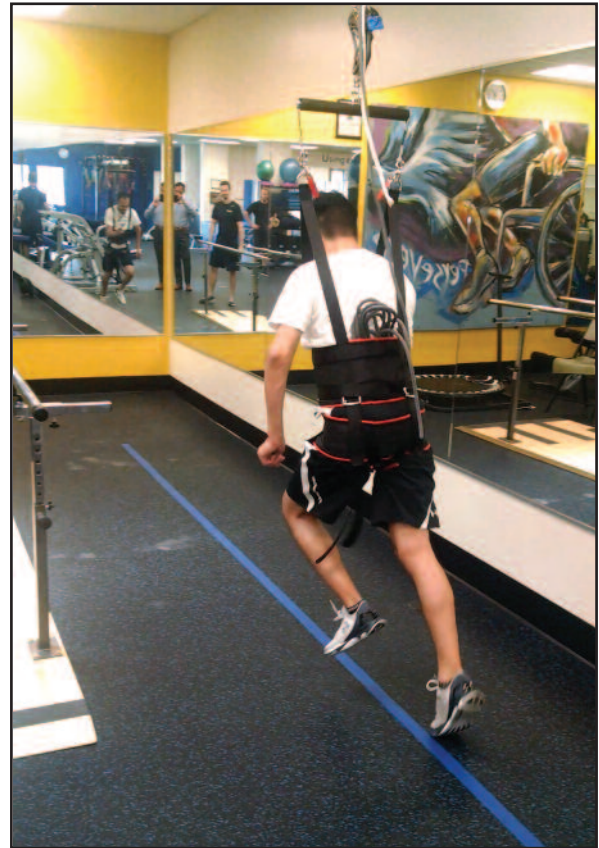
Traditionally, spinal cord injury rehabilitation has focused on compensation. The thought was that the human nervous system could not reorganize and improve function below the level of injury. Recent research and Project Walk's documented success over the last decade, has proven this to be false.

Project Walk trains clients to live and adapt to their life outside of their wheelchair. Rather than focusing on the movements and muscle contractions they are currently capable of, the trainers concentrate on the recovery of the parts of the body that are inactive and not firing by tapping into the nervous system to re-stimulate the body.

“*Weight-bearing exercise is believed to have greater impact than passive exercise alone.*”

The program focuses on using specific exercises that are related to the same movement patterns that occur during human development. Through these movements, attempts are made to reestablish patterned neural activity within the central nervous system. Clients replicate these movement patterns with the assistance of Project Walk specialists. The highly trained Certified Recovery Specialists have been taught to respond to the unique cues that each client's nervous system gives them, and by providing the proper stimulus, help it to reorganize.

After a spinal cord injury, the body begins to breakdown physiologically. This is partially caused by reducing the effect of gravity on the body. The negative effects of the wheelchair can be reversed through exercise. The effects of exercise on someone with a spinal cord injury are similar to that of able-bodied individuals. Passive exercise alone has been shown to decrease physiological breakdown after a spinal cord injury, but at Project Walk it is believed that weight-bearing exercise may have an even greater effect. This type of exercise is what the human body was designed to do; standing, walking, lifting, and ultimately being in an upright position. The emphasis is on load-bearing activities that may help increase function, bone density, muscle mass, sensation, and circulation.



The use of the Biodex FreeStep SAS allows the patient to perform load-bearing activities which may help increase function, bone density, muscle mass, sensation, and circulation.

In following the philosophy of utilizing weight-bearing exercise to decrease physiological breakdown, Hal and his team searched for a rehabilitative device that could assist some of the gait training clients that are taking their first steps since their injuries. They chose the Biodex FreeStep SAS, an overhead track and harness system, because of its versatility and ease of use. “It was the most functional piece of equipment I was able to find and I was confident it would fit well in our program,” stated Hal. As with all Biodex FreeStep installations, the configuration was customized to the facility, complementing the existing equipment floor plan.

### **Incorporating the Biodex FreeStep SAS into the program**

Project Walk utilizes the FreeStep with clients who are gait training and need assistance with supporting and controlling body weight. The clients mainly have the inability to put their full body weight on their lower limbs, and struggle to lock out their knees and control ankle movement. All the clients that use the FreeStep work with a trainer, one-on-one, during their session. The FreeStep provides a safe ambulation environment for both the client and therapist.

Shawn Gutierrez, Project Walk Specialist, is currently working with Brandon Rayburn who came to Project Walk after incurring a spinal cord injury. Using weight-bearing techniques, Shawn is able to guide Brandon through different exercises including walking on level ground, running, performing side steps and high-knee steps and walking backwards, all of which stimulate nerves and muscles not typically focused on for someone with Brandon's type of injury.



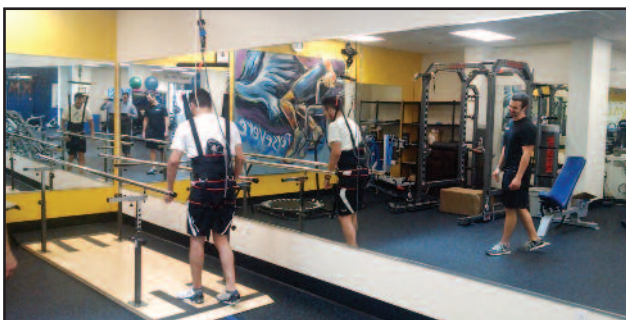
Running



Training a weak leg



Performing a side step



Walking backwards

Without the fear of falling and increased confidence, Brandon can focus more fully on his tasks of gait and balance. Brandon stated, "Me personally, it is a confidence builder, the safety is great, if I was outside I would have to be on the grass. Being confident, it allows me to move freely and try more things, it is a great feeling."



The FreeStep provides the patient with security and freedom to try more activities without the fear of falling and injury.

"Ultimately the clients have a greater sense of security and confidence while taking steps on their own for the first time. They get used to the fact that they do not need to have the hands of their trainer constantly on them to create such dynamic movements," describes Hal.

Likewise, therapists can focus on assisting, rather than supporting. Shawn weighs in on the success of using the FreeStep, "This is a great trainer tool for higher level functioning clients on over ground use. Lower level functioning clients are able to use the bars while in the FreeStep and learn knee-locking motion while standing."





“The FreeStep is a great trainer tool for both higher and lower level functioning clients”.

Hal endorses the FreeStep. “I recommend the FreeStep to other facilities similar to ours. It aids in properly gait training clients and gives them back confidence to take steps on their own.”

### **Results of the Project Walk Program**

Hal embraces his involvement with Project Walk and is proud of the accomplishments of the facility. “The majority of our clients improve their function below their level of injury! We also have the research to prove that approximately 70% of our clients achieve this type of functional return. This is a major difference between Project Walk and other activity-based programs.”

### **More than just physical rehabilitation**

Clients are not alone during the recovery process. Our specialists and peer support groups are available to provide counseling when needed. Project Walk has its own social network dedicated to individuals living with paralysis. The combination of exercise and decrease in medication may ultimately result in an increase in health and an improved quality of life. Through an intense exercise program, the body may become more resilient to common spinal cord injury ailments such as pressure sores, urinary tract infections, blood pressure problems and poor circulation.

Everyone needs hope. Without hope, recovery is nearly impossible. Clients find that our facility encourages the possibility of recovery. Hope is not discouraged but found within our staff and most importantly, our clients.

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For more information on Biodex Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation equipment, please contact:

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