

Life Care Center of Waynesville, MO uses the Biodex Balance System SD to achieve successful outcomes for senior rehab patients

Life Care Center



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Biodex Medical Systems, Inc.

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Life Care Centers of America brings more than 40 years of experience to meet the needs of residents and patients across the country. Through the years, Life Care has added Alzheimer's and dementia care, assisted and independent living facilities, inpatient and outpatient rehabilitation, and on-site physicians. Life Care was the first long-term care company to be fully and voluntarily accredited by The Joint Commission, and maintains that accreditation today.

Life Care Center of Waynesville, MO believes in treating patients and residents as family members. The facility offers physical, occupational and speech therapy on an inpatient and outpatient basis with state-of-the-art equipment and an in-house team of therapists and nurses.

Integrating the Biodex Balance System into their rehabilitation programs.

“Positive change. That’s what we’ve come to expect when we put our patients and residents on the Biodex Balance System SD,” says Jacquie Bodkin, LPTA, the Director of Rehab for Life Care Center of Waynesville, MO. “After using the system to work on their balance we find patients have less falls at home, can walk further distances without fear of falling, and demonstrate improved proprioception, stability, agility and mobility.”



Better balance for better quality of life

Life Care is a long-term care, rehab-to-home facility that also provides outpatient therapy. The advantage of this program is that once residents or patients return home they can continue to benefit from the skilled therapy services at the facility using the same therapists, same team and same equipment with which they’ve grown familiar. “Finishing

their outpatient program here with us helps assure they’ll reach maximal functional mobility,” states Bodkin. “That continuity makes a significant difference in terms of achieving the best possible outcomes.”

According to Bodkin, the majority of Biodex Balance System candidates at Life Care are age 70 or older. Most begin their program after experiencing a fall and, thus, simply rebuilding their confidence is a major issue that needs to be addressed right away.

“You see these patients come in, shuffling their feet and taking small steps,” says Bodkin, describing a typical new balance training candidate. We reassure them that we can help make a difference and then introduce them to the Balance System SD. Some are a little intimidated at first by the technology, but we ease them into the program and use the machine to demonstrate that we can safely help them to be more stable.”



Jacquie Bodkin, Director of Rehab, LPTA Life Care Center of Waynesville, Missouri

The staff at Life Care Center of Waynesville tends to start balance patients on the Biodex Balance System SD early in the rehabilitation process. That, in part, is possible because the system is designed with safety in mind, easy access and versatile programming that provides a wide range of treatment options to cover a variety of pathologies.

Using this unique device, clinicians can assess neuromuscular control by quantifying the ability to maintain dynamic bilateral and unilateral postural stability on a static or unstable surface.

“The handles are a big plus when starting out,” noted Bodkin, “because patients realize they can hold on and feel secure if necessary. They grab hold of the handles while they get a feel for the machine and the prospect of an unstable platform doesn’t seem as intimidating. By holding on in the initial stages of treatment, they build confidence in themselves and in the Balance System. Then, as they continue to gain confidence, develop muscle tone and increase their dynamic balance, we gradually take the handles away as they continue to make progress.”

One way that Bodkin and staff win over patients with significant confidence issues is to actually get on the Balance System themselves. They demonstrate how easy it is to stay in control while holding the handles, they show how the platform can progress from stable to unstable with the therapist in complete control at all times. They’ll even challenge themselves with a very unstable platform to show that the system has the range to work with anyone from the most deconditioned patient to the most athletic therapist. When patients begin to see the system as both safe and a challenge - perhaps even fun – they tend to get with the program. Life Care Center of Waynesville also keeps their Balance System SD in an open area where other patients can see it in use. That fosters a certain level of curiosity while making the system less mysterious and, in the long run, easier to give a try.

“Keeping in mind that our patients are generally deconditioned and have a history of falling,” stresses Bodkin, “we always start with a stable platform and the handles available. We then let each patient know when we are going to destabilize the platform and make sure they understand it is okay to grab hold at any time – our sessions are not tests, nor are they pass/fail. The handles are simply for safety, and we always have someone standing safely nearby so patients are never left unattended on the machine. We also use the Balance System reports to gauge progress from week to week. Showing patients a printed report that illustrates improvement is a good motivation tool and aids in rebuilding the confidence needed to walk without fear of falling.”



According to Bodkin, winning the confidence of patients is one thing, keeping them interested once they begin to grow familiar with the system is another. For this reason, she likes to change between the six different training programs built into the Biodex Balance System SD.

“We’ll switch between programs to change things up if we see a patient is getting bored, so it’s good that there are multiple options,” she expounds. “I like to use two or three different programs throughout each treatment session to keep things fresh and challenging instead of sticking with just a single program for each visit. Sometimes I’ll even do three different trials within each session because each one works different areas of concern - different proprioceptions, different muscles, different areas that need to be addressed. My thought is, ‘Why not address them all if you can.’”

While older, deconditioned patients are always a bit of a challenge to work with, Bodkin notes that seniors can do pretty well on the Balance System SD once they gain a little confidence and improve their stability. “You would be surprised at the levels senior rehab patients can attain,” she chuckles. “We’ve had them down to level six with good success. They can be surprisingly strong and well balanced once they develop a little confidence in the system and their abilities.”

“The Biodex Balance System SD has absolutely made a positive difference with our patients and residents.”

Most balance patients at Life Care complete 12 to 15 sessions on the Biodex Balance System SD, and there has never been a mishap or problem with anyone using the system reports Bodkin.

“The Biodex Balance System SD,” she summarized, “has absolutely made a positive difference with our patients and residents. After just a few sessions, their ability to shift weight, to know where their body is and where their feet are, and to catch themselves if they do happen to stumble, all show improvement and lead to increased confidence and positive changes in the way they walk. I would certainly recommend this product to other facilities that deal with senior populations. The system is simple to use, easy for patients to access, and it helps to create more successful outcomes. That’s what these sessions are all about.”

Biodex is always advancing our technology to serve you better.

Balance System™ SD
www.biodex.com/balance

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