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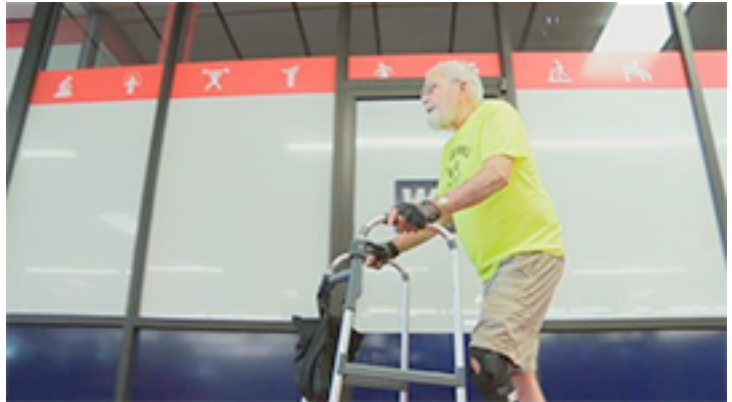
A safer way to walk at Wellness Today

By Karin McCay | October 12, 2015

LUBBOCK, TX (KCBD) - No matter your age, we know walking is great exercise, right? But what about people like Morris Graham?

At age 85, he's timid about walking because he needs a walker to keep his balance.

Imagine the feeling for him now, going to a gym where he can put his walker aside, throw down his cane and walk with confidence again.



Morris is one of many enjoying that freedom at the Wellness Today, the first place in Lubbock to install the Free Step System from Biodex.

Morris says, "I'm getting good at that deal. I think it's helping me. I recommend it."

Rick Stepp, a physical therapist and co-owner of Wellness Today, says, "They're in a safe environment where they can be challenged but won't get injured."

Secure in a harness, they are clipped to a track in the ceiling that moves with them, but won't let them fall, at least not all the way. The free-step walkers maneuver through an obstacle course like a parade. Steps and cones are in their path to challenge them and make them think about real life obstacles. Rick says the free-step challenge is ideal for anyone who is unsteady because of injury, illness or age.

The idea is not just to walk... But to fall.

Bill Lewis, also a physical therapist and one of the owners, asks Diane Snodgrass if she's ready, then gives her a gentle push. She stumbles, but with the harness is back on her feet after a few awkward steps.

Diane had a stroke 2 years ago and has some vision trouble on the left side.

So she is practicing falling from every direction, especially the left side, to prepare for the risks of real life.

She says, "I want to learn how to fall because I'm moving into a house with stairs and I'm kind of scared of it."

But Diane says as she builds her confidence- and relearns the right way to catch herself in a fall, she can see some bigger plans in her future. She says, "I would like to be able to do some crazy moves and take up dancing someday!"

Each harness can secure up to 700 pounds, with enough pulleys for 25 people to roam the track.