

SHEILA'S Stander

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A CASE STUDY

SHEILA WAS 20 YEARS OLD WHEN SHE received her standing frame. She had been receiving physical therapy for close to eight years. Her therapist felt that Sheila was no longer seeing any measurable gains in her therapy, but felt she needed some way to maintain the stretching and flexibility she now experienced. Her therapist had an Altmate Easy Stand to provide evaluation and practice. He felt this would allow Sheila to be independent in stretching hamstrings and encourage extension. Due to her cerebral palsy, she had extremely tight hamstrings and hip flexors. She often experienced spasms resulting in a trip to the emergency room. It took close to five months to obtain insurance approval for her standing frame.



SHEILA IN HER STANDER

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Sheila is a very articulate individual. She strives to be as independent as possible. Her family is very supportive. Sheila utilizes a motorized wheelchair for her mobility. Powered mobility has allowed her to be an annual participant with the local wheelchair sports camp and recently she participated as a camp counselor. She loves being part of the community.

I spoke with Sheila six months after receiving her stander. “How are you doing with your standing frame?” I asked.

“I love it,” she replied, “It is the best thing that ever happened to me. I use it almost every day for 15 to 20 minutes, usually before bed and on the weekends. It is great because it allows me to stretch my hamstrings. I stand as upright as possible and then can lower myself down some if the stretch is too much or if I get tired.”

Sheila said she moves herself up and down to get the stretch she needs. Her stander helps her with her hamstring stretch, which is the only one she cannot do on her own.

“The extension handle allows me to do this myself. I really wanted to be able to get in and out myself,” she boasts. “I can, but I usually have my mom and dad help move me to the seat, but the rest is up to me. I usually use it in the living room but sometimes move it to other rooms. The tray is great. I can read or write or just rest my arms.”

Sheila came to the store the other day with her new van. We couldn’t believe almost five years had passed. She was proud to be driving herself and talked about her part-time job and online classes. I had to ask, “How are you doing with your stander?”

“I still love it,” she said. “When I don’t do my stretches, my tone increases and I get muscle spasms. The ability to stand helps to reduce my tone and relax my body. The ability to adjust the amount of stretch myself is most beneficial.”

I asked how often she used the equipment. She said it depended on her level of activity because she can tell when her tone is increasing and her muscles are getting tight. “Sometimes I get in it every day for a week,” she said. “I just need 15 minutes or so.”

Sheila acknowledged when she is standing, she has increased awareness of her posture. She works to be as tall as possible; it feels good on her hip flexors, hamstrings and heel cords. Through the use of the standing frame, she is able to remain in her chair longer without fear of spasms. This allows her to participate more fully at home and in the community. It has been a blessing to maintain the results of years of hands on therapy. ➤

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