

ANTI-GRAVITY Treadmill Offers Sunny View Residents Unique Rehab Experience

By Judy Jackson

Sunny View Retirement Community resident Lee Marlowe has been paralyzed from the waist down for more than six years. Since she cannot use her legs, exercising is more difficult for her than most.

However, thanks to a state-of-the-art treadmill developed by NASA and at use at Sunny View, a continuing care retirement community in Cupertino, California, Marlowe is now able to “walk,” which as a result has improved her overall health.

“There’s no doubt after weekly sessions on the Alter-G, I breathe better, my heart rate is stronger and my vascular system has improved,” Marlowe said. “When I recently visited my cardiologist, he noticed some positive changes to my health and asked what I had been doing for improvement. I said I am working out on the Alter-G at Sunny View and he said I was doing great.”

The Alter-G anti-gravity treadmill is different from other fitness and therapeutic equipment because it defies gravity by applying a lifting force to the body that reduces weight on the lower extremities.

Unlike other unweighting methods, the Alter-G enables athletes to train with their natural gait and rhythm, and significantly shortens the time required for those with limited mobility, particularly older adults, to recover from injury or surgery.



Resident Lee Marlowe working out on the Alter-G

After Marlowe is harnessed into the Alter-G, the pressurized suit, or “bubble” as it’s called, lifts her body and reduces her body weight as if she were standing on the moon.

“During my 20-minute exercise program, it feels like I’m floating,” Marlowe said. “I can’t feel anything but I can move my legs. It’s a miracle.”

The machine offers various levels of weight bearing so that users can walk, jog or run with less pressure on their joints.

Sunny View Skilled Nursing Care Center is one of a handful of rehabilitation centers and medical facilities in the Bay Area that has an Alter-G on site. But in the few months of use, it is paying off with increased resident health.

“Sunny View and Select Therapies are very excited about the Alter-G,” said Teri Gill, rehabilitation director for Select Therapies, Sunny View’s rehabilitation partner.

"Walking as exercise was not an option for Ms. Marlowe but it is now. The treadmill has become an indispensable device for rehabilitation and conditioning here at Sunny View."



Lee Marlowe

Gill points to various

benefits of using the Alter-G for older adults such as the possible postponement of bone loss, diabetes and heart issues. It can also reduce arthritis pain, anxiety and depression.

Franca Rosa, another Sunny View resident, had knee pain due to arthritis. Her walking was limited even with a walker. But since using the Alter-G she has seen progress.

"I call this my going to the moon balloon," Rosa said. "It takes me up in the air and I am floating, smiling and free. I started using the treadmill for six weeks, two times per week. My doctor has seen steady improvement and I am pain free and am able to stand with little effort. He said if I continue using the Alter-G treadmill, I may not have to depend on a walker. How great is that!"

For information, please contact Judy Jackson, Sunny View, Director of Sales and Marketing, at 408.454.5600. Sunny-view.org.



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