

Creative Physical Therapy Exercises

Taryn Blackstock

Oklahoma State University

Abstract

The field of physical therapy has great variation in setting, patient age, injury, and circumstances which creates a great demand for creativity in program treatment. Each patient, injury and their personal goals are unique so their recovery should be as well. Any physical therapist can individualize a patient's treatment programs by modifying, progressing, regressing, changing engagement, or creating new exercises. The creation of a new physical therapy exercise should have purpose and target muscles in order to be applicable to other patients' treatments in the future. The purpose of this project was to create four unique exercises designed for specific populations. The purpose of the Star Excursion w/ Dice was to change the level of engagement of an exercise while turning a repetitive exercise into a fun one for younger patients. The Lateral Plank Pod Walks is a new exercise with the purpose of helping shoulder patients work on shoulder and core stability, controlled mobility, shoulder strategy, and scapular stabilization. The Pod Walk Course is another new exercise whose purpose is to be more engaging, it is also for patients to practice balance and stability along with ankle strategy and with other activities, controlled mobility. Lastly, the Study Board BOSU is an exercise modified for at home use. These exercises were thought of with creativity, observation, and connection. Physical therapists' creativity is important to the individualization of their patients' progress and recovery.

Creative Physical Therapy Exercises

Physical therapy is a field with a wide spectrum of patients and ailments, creating a great demand for creativity. Each patient, injury and body are unique, meaning that each treatment program needs to be unique as well. Each physical therapist has their own knowledge bank of exercises to give their patients, with each exercise having the capability for specificity. No recovery should have the exact same program, each therapist needs to creatively adjust programs, exercise, difficulty, and engagement for their patients. Another way to alter all of these things is to create a new exercise specific to that patient's needs. New exercises should have specific purpose and target muscles in order to be useful in other patients' programs as well. The purpose of this project was to create four unique exercises designed for specific populations.

Star Excursion c/ Dice

The Star Excursion c/Dice was created through observation, past experience, and a need for an interactive exercise for a pediatric patient. Many patients perform the star excursion balance test (Figure 1) with tape on the ground and after observation in pediatrics, any exercise can be made for children if you add in a brain game or any toy. The patient would stand in the middle of the star, made on the ground with eight points, balancing on one foot. There would be a die (Figure 2) on each tip of the star with a different number. A technician or physical therapist would work with the patient calling out a new number or color and the patient would have to reach their opposite foot to the die with that number on it by bending at the knee of the planted foot. In order to increase difficulty, the technician could say a number where they would have to add multiple die together, the therapist could also increase the distance to the die. The patient would do this exercise on both legs. Adding dice to this exercise helps to make it engaging and

fun for pediatric patients, but also any adult patients who may be struggling emotionally as well as physically in therapy. The Star Excursion c/ Dice is also a great for stability, balance, flexibility, and controlled mobility. This exercise targets core stabilizers, hip stabilizers, knee stabilizers, and ankle stabilizers.

Figure 1

Star Excursion

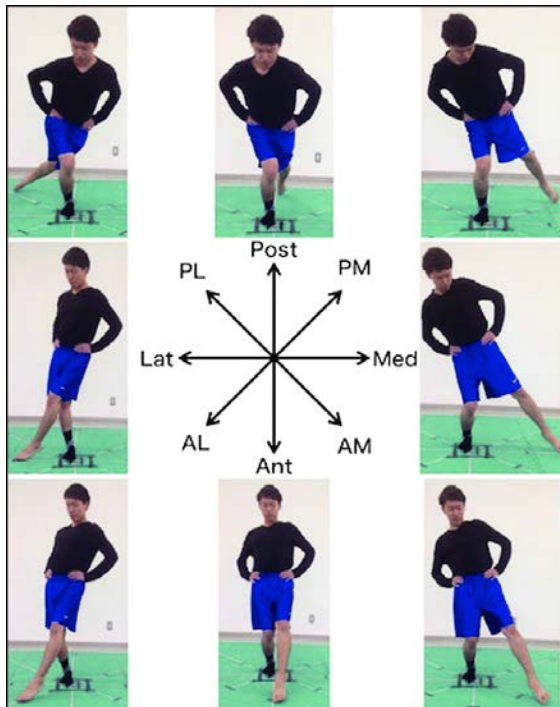


Figure 2

Foam Dice



Lateral Plank Pod Walks

Lateral Plank Pod Walks were thought of after observation and connection. Many patients work on shoulder stability as well as core stability when in an exercise program for a shoulder injury. Knee and hip patients perform pod walks for overall stability in their programs, so why are shoulder patients not using pod walks to help with their stability as well? The technician or therapist would line up the pods (Figure 3), flat side down, in a straight line just under shoulder width apart. The patient would position themselves on the first two pods in the full plank position. They will laterally move down the line one arm at a time in one direction and then back to the beginning. If difficulty needs to be increased, the therapist can turn the pods over so the rounded side is down, increase the distance between pods and/or add a Theraband around their wrists for resistance. The Lateral Plank Pod Walks would be used for shoulder and core stability, controlled mobility, shoulder strategy, and scapular stabilization. This exercise targets the core stabilizers as well as rotator cuff muscles, deltoids, trapezius muscles, latissimus muscles, serratus anterior, and pectoral muscles.

Figure 3

Balance Pods



Pod Walk Course

The Pod Walk Course was also created from observation and connection. In pediatrics if you make exercises into a game or a course of multiple things, the children are less likely to think of it as physical therapy. The technician or physical therapist would set up a fun course with the pods (Figure 3) around the clinic or home with multiple colors. The child would step with one foot on one pod and then walk through the course one foot at a time. Increasing difficulty could consist of increasing distance between pods, flipping the pods to the other side, and or having activities at each pod. For example, things to step over, pick up, reach for, or anything else that could help the child work on controlling their movement. This exercise allows one the ability to incorporate fun with therapy, but also work on balance and stability with the child's movement. This is also great for ankle strategy and with other activities, controlled mobility. The Pod Walk Course mainly targets the core stabilizers, glute complex, hip stabilizers, knee stabilizers, and ankle stabilizers, but can target other muscles depending on the other activities the therapist comes up with to add.

Study Board BOSU

During quarantine many people did not have the ability to work out at a gym and had to adjust to working out at home. This created a need for creativity with exercises and household items. A lot of students have a study board (Figure 4) or lap desk that they use for school. The top surface is firm while the bottom is soft and pillow-like. This exercise would be for those at home due to quarantine or who do not have a BOSU (Figure 5) to workout with on their own. The patient can perform many different exercises as they would on a BOSU board. The patient can do pushups, planks, or rock front to back and side to side. The purpose of these exercises is to recreate exercises you can do in a gym or clinic at home with everyday items. These exercises are also great to for shoulder stability, controlled mobility, balance, core stability, and scapular

stabilization. The Study Board BOSU exercise targets the core stabilizers, and shoulder stabilizers.

Figure 4

Study Board



Figure 5

BOSU Ball



Conclusion

All of these exercises were generated through creativity, observation, and connection. It is important that physical therapists think creatively when watching their patients or other therapists and make connections to how other exercises can be modified for other patients and/or other treatment programs. Keep in mind, there should be purpose and target muscles for each exercise.

References

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