

DID YOU  
KNOW??

## *Rocking*

it is not only incredibly satisfying,  
it could also improve your wellbeing!!



Studies show that rocking could help with:

*Pregnancy & Delivery*  
*Caesarean Section Recovery*  
*Arthritis*  
*Knee Replacement Surgery*  
*Varicose Veins*  
*Back Pain*  
*Attention Deficit Disorders*  
*Autism*  
*Alzheimer's, Dementia Relief*

AND MANY MORE...



Let's ROCK with WAWA!!

# Rocking Chair Therapy

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When first introduced to the concept of Rocking Chair Therapy people rarely question the idea - it's as if they had known it all along. But they always want to know more. Through personal accounts, therapist insight, medical research and historical references we can convey the potentially therapeutic benefits of rocking in a rocking chair. This site seeks to explore and gather information for people interested in the subject. Certainly, we are not medical professionals and in no way intend to prescribe or make crazy claims. We just want to share the passion and promise of rocking in a rocking chair.

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## Adoption

Dr Wendy Hanevold is a therapist in the Atlanta, GA area and also an adoptive parent of two through international adoption. She encourages rocking in a rocking chair towards fostering positive attachment with parents and adopted children. Dr Hanevold says rocking is marvellous – it has smell, touch, sound, and kinesthetic approaches that combine to reward both parties

## Alzheimer's, Dementia Relief & Healthy Seniors

Research from the Columbia Hospital in Milwaukee, Wisconsin resulted in an article in the "American Journal of Sports Medicine", March-April 1989 titled "Seniors ROCKING TO GOOD HEALTH" detailing the benefits of rocking to older Americans. It is good for the mind, body and spirit and even can help those with an otherwise sedentary lifestyle to achieve muscle tone through the manageable, non-weight bearing exercise of rocking in a rocking chair.

Later, studies at the University of Rochester, Rochester, New York using Rocking Chair Therapy with Alzheimer and Dementia patients. Their research showed that seniors could rock away their anxiety and depression. The patients required less medication and their balance improved as well. Further benefits included a happier nursing home staff. Families of rocking seniors were happier because their loved ones were happier than prior the use of rocking chair. Isn't it interesting that this research showed that one intervention (rocking) produced six benefits, and affected many people in a positive way?

## Arthritis

"Arthritis Today", the magazine of the Arthritis Foundation, suggests "rock the night away." The article continues: "Sit in a rocking chair while watching TV or reading and just rock. Rocking is relaxing, and it can improve strength and flexibility – especially in your knees."

## Attention Deficit Disorders - ADD & ADHD

Our exploration into Rocking Chair Therapy was prompted by a phone call from teacher Ken Rubin. He informed us that our #7 rocker is helping students with ADD and ADHD to adapt better and focus in the learning environment. We've heard more about this since we started this journey. It seems the motion of the rocking chair can accommodate the need to keep moving while these students are studying, listening, etc. We have asked the department of exceptional children in Iredell-Statesville Schools and the Georgetown School District (both in North Carolina) to place the #7 rocker in their classrooms, and we are receiving positive feedback from their experiences thus far.

## ANS (Autonomic Nervous System) Disorders

ANS - In the 1970's rebound exercise such as rocking and bouncing was studied by NASA scientists regarding astronauts returning to earth from low-earth orbit. After six months their autonomic nervous systems lost their capacity to stand in a gravitational field. The astronauts had to be dragged out of the space capsule

horizontally because they would faint upon standing. They were experiencing a dysautonomic condition which is similar to what CFS (Chronic Fatigue Syndrome) patients experience. So what did NASA determine as the most efficient procedure to bring back the livelihood of the astronauts autonomic nervous systems? Well, it was to bounce and rock them.

CFS - Recognising NASA's rocking results, it was later determined that rocking was also the best solution for CFS patients. Rocking provides natural, non-weight bearing, rhythmic motion and does an important job in autonomic tone for a population that has difficulty accomplishing exercise.

### Autism

The ARI (Autism Research Institute), always evaluating all forms of therapy, in recent years has seen an increase in interest of SIT for autistic adults and children. In treatment evaluation questionnaires that were administered, parents give sensory integration a very high percentage of 69% approval, with the highest of 47 therapies being Behavior Modification at 83%. Impressive.

Lorna Jean King (OTR, FAOTA) is one of the pioneers of Sensory Integration Therapy, lectures internationally, and is the Founder and Director of the Center for Neurodevelopmental Studies, Inc. in Phoenix, Arizona. When interviewed by the ARI she was asked about the importance of providing security and setting a calm tone in the home environment, especially after a busy day of schooling or therapy. She responded by saying "It may be as simple as having a rocking chair in their room".

### Back Pain

The story of and photographs of President John F. Kennedy rocking in a rocking chair are known to most people. His doctor had prescribed rocking for his chronic back pain. Research shows that the spinal cord can only work in one direction at a time, thus, when the brain is sending motor impulses down the spinal cord to make the legs rock the chair, pain impulses from the back are blocked. Therefore pain stimuli are prevented from reaching the brain which lets the muscles in the lower back relax.

### Caesarean Section Recovery

In an article in the "Physical Therapy Review," 40:818, 1960; a study of women who had cesarian sections showed a faster recovery if they spent an hour a day rocking. A follow-up study in Galveston, Texas in December of 1990 followed women who had cesarian sections and showed that rocking mothers had fewer gas pains, walked faster and left the hospital one day sooner than non-rocking mothers. This article was published in the "Journal of Prenatal Nursing" on December 24, December 1990. Hmm. Could that be why rockers are a standard in maternity wards today?

### Fragile X

Fragile X - Fragile X is a family of genetic conditions which impacts individuals and families in different ways. Fragile X Syndrome is the most common form of inherited

mental impairment and is sometimes referred to as Mental Retardation. Rocking in a rocking chair is a recommended part of therapy, cited for its calming effects.

### Knee Replacement Surgery

Orthopaedic surgeons have long recommended rocking as a later phase of those who are re-cooperating from knee replacement surgery.

### Polio Recovery

Dr Milton Erickson was born in 1901 and became the world's leading creator and practitioner of hypnosis. At age seventeen he contracted polio and was told he would never walk again. Living in a rural area, with little medical help available, he decided to heal himself. Dr Erickson started rocking (in a rocking chair). He discovered his ability to convert memories (classic hypnotic phenomena) of muscular movement into subtle motions while he sat in his rocking chair. As a means to reduce his pain, he recalled memories of becoming fatigued after exercise and vigorous activity and learned how to walk again. These experiences of observing, accessing and utilising resource states would become the foundation for his pioneering work in the field of psychotherapy and hypnosis.

### Post-Operative Recovery & "Speed Healing."

Speed Healing - Studies conducted at the Medical College of Virginia have shown that 'kinetic therapy' (the constant, gentle motion rocking in a rocking chair) can dramatically speed healing in severely ill patients. Dr Heinrich Addleheim of the Kinetic Therapy Clinic says that with regular rocking, "the body settles into a natural rhythm that harnesses incredible powers of recuperation and regeneration". We've seen cases of patients recuperating from a heart attack and stroke - without any trace of permanent damage - simply because they used a rocking chair while they were recovering. I've seen people bedridden with arthritis who were up and around inside a week after regular use of the rocking chair. It can be used to cure colds, flu, diabetes and even some types of cancer. It's not just a piece of furniture - it's a remarkable medical device." The positive effects of rocking on recovering stroke patients are confirmed by a March 2006 Ottawa Clinical Study.

Post-Op Recovery in Pediatric Patients - The British Columbia Children's Hospital in Vancouver, Canada uses kinesthetic methods including Rocking Chair Therapy for post-operative relief from acute, painful medical procedures. And for paediatric patients, this pain reduction technique is synergistic with analgesics and has long term benefits for paediatric patients.

Post-Op Ileus Recovery - Ileus is a condition in which there is an absence of muscular contractions of the intestine which typically move the food through the digestive system and can result in an intestinal obstruction. The article above also suggested the use of rocking chairs in the recovery of other gas inducing surgeries which are the reason Robert Massey chose a similar subject for his PhD dissertation. He was in charge of nursing at the University of Texas M.D. Anderson

Cancer Center in Houston. His study was on the effects of rocking on Postoperative Ileus Duration (return of bowel function) subjective pain and time to discharge following cancer-related abdominal surgery. His findings which will be published in August showed Postoperative Ileus function returned 16.8 hours earlier than normal recoveries. In most hospital settings that could shorten the hospital stay by one day!

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Knee Surgery Recovery - Orthopaedic surgeons have long recommended rocking to those who are re-cooperating from knee replacement surgery.

### [Pregnancy & Delivery](#)

We are all familiar with the theories and results of using cradles and rockers to calm babies and ease them off to sleep. We have run across research proposing that the rocking of babies by their mothers is not only soothing but crucial in the bonding process between mother and child.

Prenatal Benefits - At the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at the Hua Chiew Hospital in Bangkok, Thailand, authors Panthuraamphorn C. Dookchitra D., and Sanmaneechai M. composed a study and compiled their findings in a book "Effects of Prenatal Tactile and Vestibular Enrichment on Human Development". Their purpose was to investigate the influence of prenatal tactile and vestibular intervention on an infant's social, emotional and motor development and to evaluate maternal-child attachment after participation in the prenatal activity. One hundred and twenty women in the study were trained to stroke their abdomen, pat rhythmically on the fetus' bottom and rock themselves in a rocking chair 10-15 minutes each day throughout their pregnancy. Anne Ayres, an American nerve psychologist, recommends that at the start of the 10th week of pregnancy, women should rock 5 to 10 minutes twice a day. Her belief is that rocking promotes the development of the fetal nervous system.

Infancy and Child Development - The infant's developmental outcomes were evaluated by the Denver Developmental Test regarding social, emotional and motor development. The mother-child attachment and the calming effect on the baby were assessed and evaluated as well. The infant's responses to stimuli were also analysed. The participating children stopped crying and showed calming effects when rhythmic patting and rocking were applied. They also had a capacity of conditioned learning by kicking back in response. The enriched infants smile, hold their heads up and sit and stand earlier than the control group. They also showed good emotion

and better performance in mother-child attachment. The findings in this study suggest that infants have an ability to learn in the intro and that the prenatal tactile sensation (rocking) vestibular enrichment may be an effective way promote a child's social, emotional and motor development.

Numerous articles in "Mothering" magazine extol the benefits of rocking for mother and child. Rocking soothes fussy babies and relaxes mothers. It stimulates the balance mechanism of the inner ear. It assists an infant's biological development and ability to be alert and attentive.

At the University of Waikato in New Zealand rocking stimulation has been shown to be beneficial for premature babies in reducing apnea (see SIDS).

Labour, Delivery and Recovery - Lamaze International advocates that moving freely in labour improves a woman's sense of control and decreases her need for pain medication. In choosing a care provider, one of the things they suggest in the birthing room is a rocking chair.

Cesarean Section Recovery - In an article in the "Physical Therapy Review" 40:818, 1960; a study of women who had cesarian sections showed a faster recovery if they spent an hour a day rocking. A follow-up study in Galveston, Texas in December of 1990 followed women who had cesarian sections and showed that rocking mothers had fewer gas pains, walked faster and left the hospital one day sooner than non-rocking mothers. This article was published in the "Journal of Prenatal Nursing" on December 24, December 1990. Hmm. Could that be why rockers are a standard in maternity wards today?

Post-Partum Weight Loss - Also, good news for postpartum weight loss: rocking burns about 150 calories an hour and will help mothers recover more rapidly from the experience of childbirth (also from "Mothering" magazine).

## Sensorial

Sensory Integration (SI) - SI is the ability to take in information through your physical senses (touch, movement, smell, taste, vision, and hearing) and put it together with prior information (stored) and make a meaningful response.

Sensory Integrative Dysfunction (SID) - SID is a disorder in which sensory input is not integrated or organised appropriately in the brain. Main symptoms of SID look like symptoms of other disabilities that include Fragile X, ADHD, ADD, Autism, Pervasive Development Disorder (PDD), and Tourette Syndrome.

Sensory Integration Therapy (SIT) - SIT is a theory used by occupational therapists. It is one approach used by therapists as part of a comprehensive and individualised intervention program. Its principles have been recommended for and applied to autism learning disabilities, attention problems, and developmental problems like Fragile X. Rocking in a rocking chair is one of the calming activities that are recommended. Sensory integration intervention is based on a neurophysiological view of autism. The late A. Jean Ayres, PhD of the US developed the theory and

practice of sensory integration. She believed every autistic child should have a rocker in his room.

Fragile X - Fragile X is a family of genetic conditions which impacts individuals and families in different ways. Fragile X Syndrome is the most common form of inherited mental impairment and is sometimes referred to as Mental Retardation. Sensory impairment or sensory processing difficulties are often a part of the puzzle. Rocking in a rocking chair is a recommended part of therapy, cited for its calming effects.

In September of 2006, The American Library Association offered a workshop at their annual conference entitled "Welcoming Special Needs Children at Your Library". Lindsey Biel OCR/L, presenter and co-author of *Raising a Sensory Smart Child* suggests incorporating rocking chairs into the environment for its soothing and repetitive motion for children with a range of disorders.

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### Varicose Veins

There is research on the use of rocking to stimulate circulation, improve muscle tone, and to help prevent and cure varicose veins. Many pregnancy support articles and websites recommend rocking in a rocking chair to avoid the development of varicose veins.

### Vestibular Function and SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome)

Vestibular Function - The vestibular system helps the body maintain its "postural equilibrium". It relates to or effects the perception of body position and movement and is essential in coordinating the position of the head and the movement of the eyes. The vestibular system resides in the inner ear.

Dreams and VF - An article by Kenneth Leslie and Robert Ogilvie titled "Vestibular Dreams: The Effect of Rocking on Dream Mentation" describes a rocking time interaction; rocking increased lucid mentation during early morning REM periods. These results suggest that vestibular activation during REM sleep can influence dream mentation; specifically, dream self-reflectiveness and vestibular imagery. This article appeared in *Dreaming: Journal of the Association for the Study of Dreams*. Vol. 6 (1) 1-16 Mar. 1996.

SIDS and VF - At the University of Waikato in New Zealand there have been studies relating vestibular function to SIDS (Sudden Infant Death Syndrome). Rocking stimulation has been shown to be beneficial for premature babies in reducing apnea.

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