

CONNECTICUT VALLEY HOSPITAL

**Physical Therapy Services**

**PT Equipment Procedure # 30**

**Re: Walkers (Standard Pick-up, Rolling Walker and Platform Rolling Walker)**

**Date: March 20, 2000**

**Revised: October 19, 2008**

**Description:**

A walker is a 3 or 4 posted aluminum assistive ambulation device used to increase a patient's base of support and therefore, improve his or her balance, stability of gait and functional ambulation.

**Indications:**

To provide protective weight bearing for orthopedic, neurological, balance, coordination, etc., injury or loss. Improves balance, stability of gait, and independence in functional activities.

**Precautions:**

Type of walker used should be determined by a physical therapist. Patients with history of back or shoulder pain should use rolling walker. Walker tips brakes if applicable and gait pattern should be checked when presenting walker to patient.

**Procedure:**

Fitting: use rail or parallel bars for fitting and assessment to support and prevent loss of balance.

- A. Standard pick-up and rolling walker fit with patient standing between back legs of walker. Elbows should be flexed to 20° and walker height should be at Anterior Superior Iliac Crest. A taller walker may be used to encourage more trunk and hip extension.
- B. Platform Rolling Walker fit with patient standing between back legs of walker and arms on tray of walker. Shoulders should be flexed to 60° and weight bearing should be primarily on forearms with hands resting on hand grips. Trunk and hips should be flexed slightly anteriorly.
- C. Clean Walkers as per Physical Therapy Cleaning Procedures.

**Basic**

**Principles:**

Gait pattern should be determined by prescription and abilities of patient.

- A. Non-Weight bearing - no weight bearing allowed on involved extremity.
- B. Partial-Weight Bearing - 10 pounds maximum allowed on involved extremity.
- C. Weight Bearing as Tolerated - weight bearing to the point of discomfort. If no pain, patient may bear full weight on involved extremity.

**Gait Pattern:**

Pick-up Walker: Walker lifted and advanced approximately six inches. Involved extremity is advanced into center of walker and uninvolved extremity is then advanced into center of walker. Maintain six-inch distance between feet at all times.

Rolling Walkers: Walker should slowly and constantly be advanced while alternating steps each approximately six inches past stationary foot. If hand brakes are present on walker, they should be squeezed when stopping and transferring to seat. Maintain six-inch distance between feet at all times.