



[Print](#) | [Close this window](#)

Physical therapists prescribe Wii time

Thu Dec 6, 2007 11:40am EST

By Lisa Baertlein

LOS ANGELES (Reuters) - Franklin Perry used to spend hours performing video game feats with his thumbs but lately he has been using the Nintendo Wii, and the rest of his body, to regain his strength after suffering a stroke.

The 51-year-old, who had a stroke about three weeks ago, has been working hard to rebuild the muscles in his immobilized right side at Ohio State University Medical Center's Dodd Hall Rehabilitation Hospital in Columbus.

"I'm just now getting some movement back," said Perry, who before entering the center logged his game time at on a Sony (6758.T: [Quote](#), [Profile](#), [Research](#), [Stock Buzz](#)) PlayStation 2 home console or in shopping mall arcades.

Robbie Winget, an occupational therapist who oversees use of the Wii at Dodd Hall, said news that a rehab hospital in Alberta, Canada, was using the popular new video game system sparked the idea.

Winget played with the Wii at a friend's house and was convinced that it could help patients build balance, coordination, endurance and upper and lower body strength.

"I thought it was cool that you used your body to control the movement," said Winget, who added that Nintendo (7974.OS: [Quote](#), [Profile](#), [Research](#), [Stock Buzz](#)) has not provided the hospital with the video game console.

The hospital has been using the Wii for about four months to help people recovering from strokes and spinal cord or traumatic brain injuries, according to Winget.

Patients also use the Web-connected console to find information on its news or weather channels to improve brain function.

All the patients at Dodd Hall usually undergo a total of three hours of daily therapy and work with the video game system for about 30 minutes per day two to three times per week.

Winget said he didn't think other home video game consoles could match the Wii's appeal with older patients.

"The idea of sitting there fiddling a couple of buttons on a video game (controller) is not motivating or interesting at all," said Winget.

Perry, who favors his left hand when playing games, said his Wii therapy includes holding the "Wiimote" controller in his right hand while he bowls for strikes or punches and jabs an on-screen opponent.

His therapists said he is pushing hard on all of his exercises, but Perry said the video games are helping him go to the next level.

"This is more fun. It makes it more exciting. It gets me to work harder," said Perry, who has a fierce video game rivalry with his teenage nephew.

But Winget said the Wii will not replace conventional therapy. "It's one more way to meet specific goals associated with therapy," he explained.

Perry said he has two goals -- getting home by Christmas and getting a Wii, supplies of which are tight for the second holiday season in a row.

"I wish I could find one," said Perry. "Anybody that's over who wants to play

can play. If not, I'll be on that thing all by myself."

© Thomson Reuters 2008. All rights reserved. Users may download and print extracts of content from this website for their own personal and non-commercial use only. Reproduction or redistribution of Thomson Reuters content, including by framing or similar means, is expressly prohibited without the prior written consent of Thomson Reuters. Thomson Reuters and its logo are registered trademarks or trademarks of the Thomson Reuters group of companies around the world.

Thomson Reuters journalists are subject to an Editorial Handbook which requires fair presentation and disclosure of relevant interests.