

STRAIGHT FROM THE HORSE'S BACK

A CASE STUDY

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Background:

☞ Katie is a seven year old female with Arthrogryposis and diagnosed with Scoliosis since three years old. The scoliosis went from 0 to 60 degrees within a year. Several surgical and non-surgical opinions were sought. Though flexible, the curve worsened even with the TLSO. In 2003, she was now at 76 degrees.

☞ Mobile with walker, decreased muscle strength, balance, and endurance. Uses AFO's bilaterally and TLSO for scoliosis

☞ Active in therapy since 6 months old, currently receives OT 2x/wk, PT 1x/wk, therapeutic riding 1x/wk, swimming 1x/wk. Has had OMT, acupuncture, and music therapy weekly.

☞ She is in 2nd grade with a full time aid, active in church, Girl Scouts, special needs soccer.

☞ "The doctors and therapists had all told us that there was nothing that could be done to improve her condition except surgery.



Katie's riding history:

☞ Katie began riding when she was one and one-half years old. "We saw changes right away". Her balance changed dramatically, decreasing falls and injury. "She loves to ride".

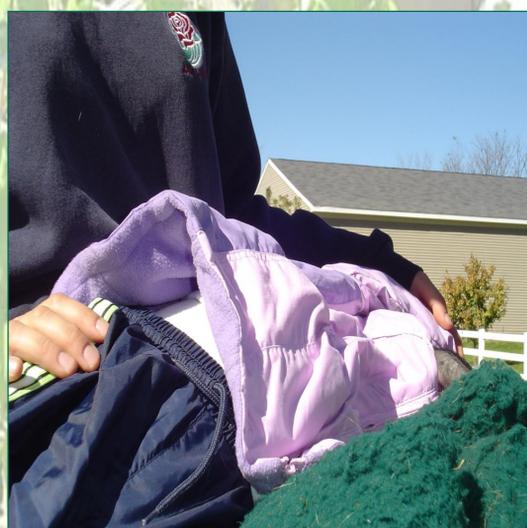
☞ Katie rode with the instructor and was guided by the therapist at that time.

☞ Goals were more global; overall joint mobility, strength, endurance, gross motor skills. Cognitive skill building, mobility, and psychological boost.

The new plan:

☞ We hypothesized that we may be able to decrease the degree of curvature by positioning Katie on the horse in a way that would open the 'C' of the curve. Using the horse's dynamic 3 dimensional movement, soft tissue changes could be made and structural changes could be obtained as well as maintaining or improving her existing flexibility.

☞ Katie rode in front of the therapist in various positions including side-lying across the horse, prone, side sitting with trunk rotation, and sitting forward with trunk rotation. Though most positions were done in both directions for balance and flexibility, more time was spent in positions that would 'open the C'.



The Results:

☞ This process was started when her curve was at 76 degrees. Surgery was put off for 3 months and this was implemented. **There were no other changes in any of her therapies, no other intervention was done than what had been in place for several years.**

☞ After the first 3 months; x-rays showed an improvement from 76 to 67 degrees (told this was a measuring error)

☞ Three months later; improvement from 67 to 55 degrees (told "you know, this isn't supposed to happen don't you?")

☞ Six months later, improvement from 55 degrees to 40!

☞ Today she has lost some of that improvement from Feb. of 2004. Katie has had to miss many sessions due to a broken leg, a growth spurt of several inches, and various life issues. She is back routinely and more determined than ever! No other changes were made in her life or the interventions she sought; only in the approach used in her riding time. Katie will avoid surgery for her scoliosis if these changes and her continued flexibility can be maintained.

☞ From Katie's view point; "I love it!" and that says it all!