**What Can High-Intensity Gait Training Do for Me?**

A Fact Sheet for Patients Considering HIGT in Physical Therapy

**What is High-Intensity Gait Training (HIGT)?**

HIGT is walking and stepping practice that is vigorous enough to keep your heart rate over a certain target level. That level is specific to you and will be determined by your physical therapist using your resting and maximal heart rate to calculate your *maximum heart rate* or *heart rate reserve*. Your physical therapist will assign walking exercises that keep your heart rate at or above 60-80% of that heart rate.

**What can HIGT do for me?**

In people who have experienced a stroke, HIGT has been found to improve walking-related outcomes such as speed, walking quality, walking symmetry, as well as balance, and transfers. HIGT is also an effective way to improve your cardiovascular fitness and endurance and decrease your risk of having another stroke.

**What will HIGT sessions look and feel like?**

HIGT sessions will consist primarily of walking!

In order to keep your heart rate in the target zone your physical therapist may include challenges such as:

- Adding weight to your legs
- Increasing speed
- Ascending and descending stairs
- Changing directions
- Adding obstacles

During these activities, your physical therapist will keep a close watch over your heart rate and make sure you are responding to the treatment the way you should. Your physical therapist is specially trained to monitor your response to exercise and make sure all treatment sessions are safe. HIGT may cause you to breathe hard or sweat, but these are normal responses to exercise and are often signs that you are working hard enough!

**Where can I learn more about HIGT?**

If you are interested in pursuing HIGT, please contact your physician or physical therapist to see if this treatment is appropriate for you. Several references are included on the back side of this handout. Also, all the research that has been conducted on HIGT is available online. You can go to [www.neuropt.org/locomotor](http://www.neuropt.org/locomotor) to learn more.
References


