A physiotherapist in a dark blue t-shirt is kneeling on a green mat, assisting a patient with a walking aid. The patient is wearing a white shirt and dark pants. The background shows a clinical setting with a red mat and a metal frame.

To Prepare You for Step Out For Stroke! Ankle Foot Orthosis (AFO) and Walking Aids. Are There Gadgets Really Helping Me?

By Physiotherapist Gan Jing Tap

Founder of [The Rehab Studio](#)



Gan Jing Tap (Zino)

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- Honors Degree in Bachelor of Science in Physiotherapy from SIT TCD
- 7 years of experience in St Luke's Hospital
- Certified in Neuro-Developmental Treatment in the Management of Adults with Stroke and Brain Injury
- Special interest in Neuro Conditions. Stroke, Parkinson's Disease, Spinal Cord Injury, Electrical Stimulation and Elderly Rehab.

The Rehab Studio

- Founded in March 2020, mainly provides home and onsite therapy
- Accessible rehabilitation service, especially those with transportation issue
- Integration of rehabilitation into daily life, living environment, community and work place

Outline

1. Introduction
2. Experience Sharing
3. Ankle Foot Orthosis (AFO)
4. Pro and Cons of AFO
5. Walking Aids
6. Pro and Cons of Walking Aids
7. Exercises

Experience Sharing




- I walk 30 minutes to 1 hour everyday!
But why am I not seeing any improvement?
- I do exercise everyday! I can do push up, I can do squat! But why am I not seeing any improvement?

Learning Points

- The important of knowing what you are doing and why you are doing.
- The important of knowing the different between general exercises and rehab exercises.

Repetition is the key, **only when you are doing it right and setting the right goal!**

Different Types of AFO

Hard / Rigid	Soft / Flexible	Shoes lace / String
		
<p>Severe foot droop</p>	<p>Moderate to Mild foot drop</p>	<p>Mild foot drop</p>
<p>Fixed at 90 degree. No movement allow. Very unnatural.</p>	<p>Elastic support. Allows movement. More natural. Can adjust degree of support.</p>	<p>Fixed / Elastic Allows small degree of movement</p>

Pros of AFO

- Allow walking with increase independency, longer distance
- Allow early walking after stroke
- Provide sufficient stability to the ankle
- Increase the confidence of stroke survivors in walking

Cons of AFO

- Take away the opportunity of the weakened muscles to “work”
- Patient may develop compensated / unnatural walking pattern
- When becomes a habit or daily routine without proper rehabilitation, this can potentially be a barrier for your improvement

Different Types of Walking Aids

Two Hands



Require 2 hands to use

Promote the use of affected hand
Promote relatively better trunk alignment /
center alignment

One Hand



Require only 1 hand to use

May cause under-use of affected hand and leg
For severe case, may cause body alignment /
posture problem in long terms

Pros of Walking Aids

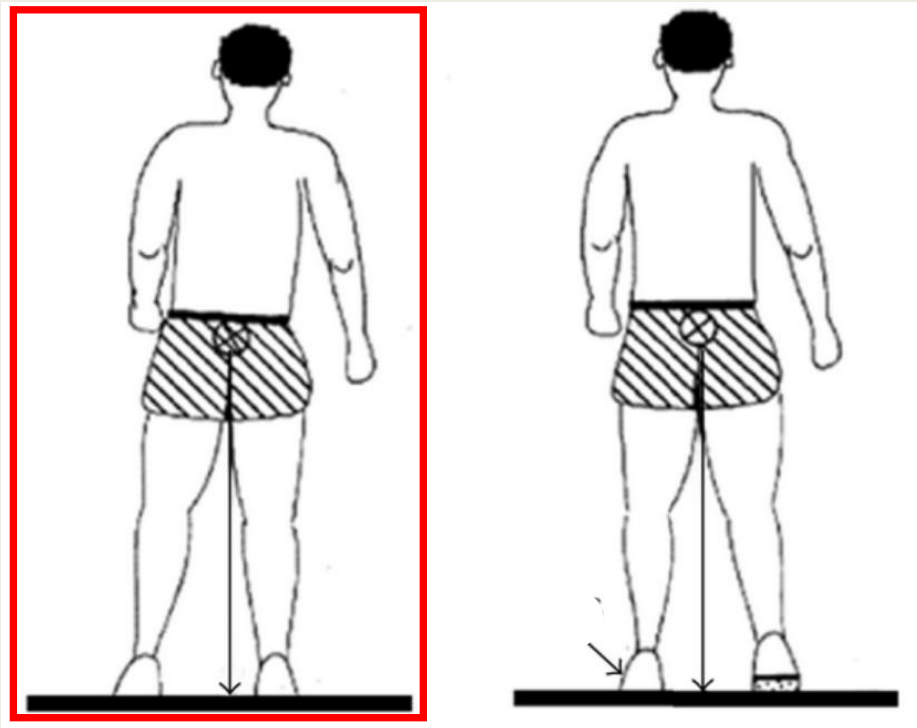
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Cons of Walking Aids

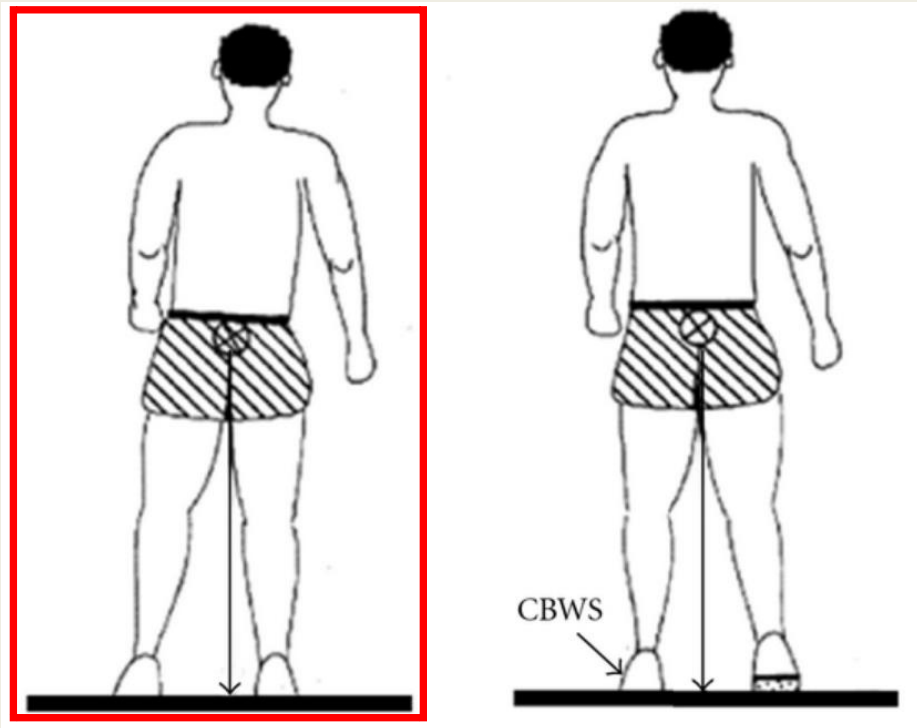
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What is posture awareness?

- **Posture awareness** is the conscious awareness of the alignment of body parts in relationship to one another, and is influenced by each of the body's joints.



These gadgets take away the opportunity of the weakened muscles to work!



Affected Leg



Non Affected Leg



What should I do with these gadgets?

- Do not stop using the gadgets without approval of your therapist!
- Understand the pros and cons of these gadgets.
- Discuss with your therapist
- Set aside a “Rehab Time” to create opportunity for those weakened muscles to work

Exercise Time!!!

Disclaimers

- I'm not your physiotherapist, and I have not done any assessments on you.
- So all my advice here are not personalized to you but more of a general advice that come from my experience.
- If you are not confident in performing any of these exercises, please do not attempt.
- If you are in doubts, please do not perform any of these exercises.
- You can discuss with your therapist, and suggest if they can try it out with you.
- I, as well as SNSA, do not hold any responsibility that results from trying out these exercises.

Home exercises to
improve swing phase
(bringing your leg forward)

Home exercises to
improve stance phase
(standing and support on
your leg)

Thank you!

- Question and Answer

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