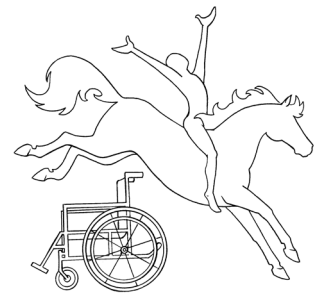


# Therapy Services at Ride On



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Serving the San Fernando and Conejo Valleys

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## From the American Hippotherapy Association: What is Hippotherapy

### Hippotherapy as a treatment strategy:

Hippotherapy is a physical, occupational, or speech-language therapy treatment strategy that utilizes equine movement as part of an integrated treatment plan to achieve functional outcomes. Equine movement provides multidimensional movement, which is organized, rhythmic, repetitive and has variability. The dynamic input from the horse is an excellent tool for improving motor control by modulating tone, improving strength, motor planning, coordination, postural control, balance, and endurance, particularly of the core, but of the extremities as well. Equine movement offers well-modulated sensory input to vestibular, proprioceptive, tactile and visual channels coupled with functional activities and with movement through space. During gait transitions, the patient must perform subtle adjustments in the trunk to maintain a stable position. When a patient is sitting forward astride the horse, the horse's walking gait facilitates movement and sensory responses similar to that required in typical human gait. The effects of equine movement on postural control, sensory systems, and motor planning can be used to facilitate coordination and timing, grading of responses, respiratory control, sensory integration skills and attentional skills. Equine movement can be used to facilitate the neurophysiologic systems that support all of our functional daily living skills.

### Hippotherapy by discipline:

**Physical Therapists:** The physical therapist is able to use equine movement in combination with other physical therapy strategies for working on mobility, balance, postural control, coordination, and motor planning for achievement of skills such as sitting, standing and walking.

**Occupational Therapists:** The occupational therapist is able to combine the effects of the equine movement, motor and sensory, with other intervention strategies for working on fine motor control, sensory integration, feeding skills, attentional skills, and functional daily living skills in a progressively challenging manner.

**Speech-Language Pathologists:** The speech-language pathologist is able to use equine movement to facilitate the physiologic systems that support speech and language. When combined with other speech-language intervention strategies, the speech-language pathologist is able to generate effective remediation of communication disorders and promote functional communication outcomes.

***Specially trained therapy professionals evaluate each potential patient on an individual basis to determine the appropriateness of including Hippotherapy as a treatment strategy. The therapy professional works closely with the horse professional to manipulate various aspects of the horse's movement, position, management style, equipment and types of activities to generate effective remediation protocols and to promote functional outcomes.***

*As excerpted from AmericanHippotherapyAssociation.org*