



VIII.

Similarly this unit may be equally well employed in giving leg exercises (Diagram IX), the arm or hand being the anchorage and the position of the arm controlling the angle of pull and tension of the spring.



IX.

In this article I have deliberately not specified conditions for which these exercises can be used; that is up to the physiotherapist to adapt the basic idea to the needs of her individual patient.

These exercises are merely suggestions given in good faith, and I would most heartily appreciate other ideas and opinions on Spring Gymnastics. I am sure there is tremendous scope for simple methods of Rehabilitation. Mrs. Guthrie Smith has already blazed the trail, and an interchange of ideas is always a stimulus. May I hope that this is the first of many articles on similar lines?

## AVALON

### A BRIEF ACCOUNT OF THE WORK DONE AT THE REHABILITATION CENTRE.

By SUSIE OOSTHUIZEN, M.C.S.P., Superintendent.

**I**N 1952 the Avalon Association for the rehabilitation of the Physically Handicapped transferred its Centre from Tulbach in the Cape to "Tussenkoppies" Farm near Johannesburg.

In the beginning this new centre, which was just a farm, had to be put into some sort of shape in order to accommodate 9 patients, and an old barn was converted into a gym, etc. At first it was doubtful whether there would be a demand for such a Centre. But soon, after some propaganda, it was discovered that more accommodation would be necessary and the total was then brought up to 20 beds, and now the demand is so great that over 100 names are on the waiting list.

Cases are drafted from various organisations or directly. Among the organisations interested are: The Cripple Care Organisations, Hospitals, Welfare Organisations, Military Pensions Department, Social Welfare Departments, W.C.A. and Labour Departments and Doctors. A medical certificate is necessary in all cases applying for admission, which includes the history of the case, suggested lines of treatment, and probable duration of stay at the Centre. Close co-operation exists between all these different departments and the Superintendent, and the services of honorary doctors are available at any time.

To quote examples of how the Centre operates from the co-ordination with allied organisations a short history is given below of Frankie Wright. Here was a boy who, at the age of 9 years, had his right leg amputated above the knee, due to osteomyelitis, and for the following 30 years he had a recurrent osteomyelitis in the left hip. The picture then was that Frankie sat in a chair, not even a wheelchair, with an amputated leg, a withering left leg with

hip contractures, an increase in girth size, loss of muscle tone and a mental outlook which debarred him from any sort of social life. So, Frankie had not walked for 30 years.

On the 6th of February, 1953 this patient entered AVALON with new hope of walking again. Sling exercises were commenced and although the bone in the hip was very osteoporosed, the risk of attempting to straighten the leg in order to fit a weight bearing caliper was taken, and active assisted exercises were begun. During this period the Physiotherapy Department at the Johannesburg General Hospital very kindly assisted Avalon by giving ultra violet light with the Kromayer to the hip twice weekly for a period of three months. (It is interesting to note that the hip has been clear for 6 months).

The Social Welfare Department during this period, set to work to obtain the approval of the Health Department for the making of a prosthesis for the right leg and a caliper for the left leg. Once this order was sanctioned, the Government Artificial Limb Factory made the necessary appliances and then the teaching of walking started.

From the anti-social view point, ways and means to break down a 30 year old barrier had to be brought into the programme. This was started by introducing strangers to him, encouraging him to talk about his disability and encouraging him to attend places of entertainment in public. Outings in the company of other patients were constantly organized, various public bodies visited the Centre, and soon Frankie not only started to talk about himself, but actually enjoyed doing so.

The final scene in his rehabilitation was when the Superintendent took him on a holiday, which made him



A great day for Frankie as he takes his first steps in 30 years.



"Jose," another Avalon case, 25 years confined to a chair, finding his feet for the first time.

realize that he could venture away to distant places just as well as other people could. To-day Frankie is able to walk with two sticks, stairs which were once his bogey mean nothing to him, and his outlook on life has completely changed. So at 39, life began for Frankie after a period of 6 months at Avalon.

Amputees from all over the country, as far as South West Africa, are sent to the Centre through Social Welfare Departments, whilst being fitted with prostheses at the Government Artificial Limb Factory. During the fitting stage these patients are taught to walk or how to use artificial hands, whichever the case may be, so that when the final stages of the making of the appliances is reached, they are already conversant with their new "gadgets." The duration of their stay at Avalon, depending on the disability, is generally 3 to 6 weeks. Paraplegics are long term cases and need very special attention. Pressure sores are the greatest problem and constant turning during the night is necessary. These cases are inclined to fits of

depression and great tact is necessary in their treatment.

Polio cases are long cases and stay at the Centre for months. One interesting case, Jose Borges, took 4½ months to master the art of walking with calipers and crutches. But Jose had not walked for 25 years! After a number of operations, he was referred to Avalon by an orthopaedic surgeon. Jose, who was from Lourenco Marques, too, is grateful to AVALON.

Funds are very necessary to carry on the work at the Centre. At present there is no State Aid and consequently fund raising has to be undertaken continuously. Street collections are held in many towns all over the Union. Assistance is given by Cripple Care Organisations, annual membership subscriptions, donations from many organisations interested in Welfare Work and firms and members of the public.

AVALON, in spite of many difficulties, manages to hold its head above water and is even contemplating expansion.