

# Back in the Saddle after Hydrotherapy



by Southeast Health Group

Ron White of La Junta knows what it's like to get bucked off a horse--and get back on again. Three months ago he was moving cattle when the horse he was riding reared up. Ron landed on the saddle horn, splitting his pelvis in two. He had surgery to install a steel plate in his pelvis and began the journey of learning to walk again six weeks later.

"They gave me permission to start physical therapy at 6 weeks, even though I was still in a wheelchair and couldn't bear any weight," Ron said. Ron began using the hydrotherapy pool at Southeast Health Group's new Wellness Center in La Junta. "The staff was very helpful and accommodating, and they worked around my schedule."

The hydrotherapy pool is specially designed to assist in injury recovery. The pool holds one person at a time and the water is only chest-deep. Bars allow a person to hold on and steady themselves in the weightless environment. The floor of the pool has a treadmill that can be set to work at an individual's pace. Jets can be programmed to direct water at different body

parts to provide resistance, which aids in strengthening designated muscles. An underwater camera sends live video feed to a TV monitor to provide feedback. A lift is available to lower people who need assistance getting into the pool.

"The jet system on the hose helped to break up the scar tissue," Ron said. "I would use the treadmill to practice walking. The camera was also a big plus because I would think I was walking and standing straight, but they would point out that I had one foot turned to the side. It made me more aware of how I needed to correct my walking and my posture. It's a big plus to see for yourself what you are doing on the screen." "After I started walking on the treadmill, I was able to start doing other exercises. I would recommend it to anybody with



an injury. It was a really good experience and it gave me a head start on learning to walk again. The surgeon said I would be on a walker for a few months, but I was able to go from the wheelchair right to walking and I think a lot of it was due to the water sessions," said White.

**For more information about hydrotherapy services at Southeast Health Group's Wellness Center, call 1-800-511-5446, or visit [www.southeasthealthgroup.org](http://www.southeasthealthgroup.org).**