

# Is horseback riding an effective therapy for children with cerebral palsy?

childhood  
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## Summary

The answer is, yes! Horseback riding can be used as an effective form of therapy for children with cerebral palsy. In this study, scientists were interested in examining two types of riding therapy: **hippotherapy**—using the horse to improve balance and equilibrium reactions—and **therapeutic horseback riding**—teaching the child specific riding skills. The scientists carefully reviewed articles and data published on these topics. They found moderate support for use of hippotherapy for treating muscle symmetry in the trunk and hip and for using therapeutic horseback riding for improving gross motor function when compared to regular therapy or time on a waiting list.

## What families and practitioners should know

The use of horseback riding can be an effective means of intervention for children with cerebral palsy and a useful addition to, or variation upon, regular therapy. Children and parents can also enjoy the interaction with the horses. Moreover, there is a positive social interaction between instructors, parents, volunteers, and children during this innovative intervention. Talk to your healthcare provider today about incorporating this option into your child's care.

## Reference

Snider, L., Korner-Bitensky, N., Kamman, C., Saleh, M. (2007). Riding as therapy for children with cerebral palsy: Is there evidence of its effectiveness? *Physical & Occupational Therapy in Pediatrics*, 27(2), 5-21

Link to article :

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/17442652>