

Client: Robert

Parent(s): Jeffrey and Mary Elizabeth

PT/OT/Supplier: Betsy McKone (Numotion)

Location: Los Angeles, CA

Robert is a Dynamic Seating old-timer. This 27 year old man has been using Dynamic Seating for about 10 years now. He first began using Dynamic Seating when a change in funding prompted the order for a new manual wheelchair and his therapists at California Children’s Services (CCS) along with Betsy McKone (then of Rehab Specialists and later Numotion) turned to Dynamic Seating options. Robert had a long history of breaking items on his wheelchair, particularly his footplates and back canes, due to very strong extensor tone.



Equipment Breakage

Robert broke items on his wheelchair frequently. He was constantly extending in his seating system. He had a habit of breaking his wheelchair at 4:30pm on the Friday afternoon of a 3-day weekend! His parents couldn’t feed Robert unless he was in his wheelchair seat and he couldn’t sit in the wheelchair if it was broken. At these times, he sat in a Tumbleforms seat or Rifton chair, but the family couldn’t go anywhere. If his wheelchair was broken, Robert couldn’t even go to school. His Mom was so desperate that she took the wheelchair to a welding shop three times, as the standard repair process could be slow.



Since receiving Dynamic Seating, Robert’s wheelchair has significantly less breakage. Robert still breaks his back canes at times, though rarely. The elastomers in the Dynamic Rocker Back need to be replaced, as these are most likely worn. These often need replacement annually, particularly with clients who exert significant forces. Replacing these, as well as using the correct level of resistance, should prevent further breakage.

Robert still exerts enough force against his head support that the supplier has added dual vertical rods to prevent breakage. His parents were not aware of Dynamic Head Support hardware, as this is a more recent Seating Dynamics product offering. They are anxious to get this for Robert to diffuse his extension at the neck, as well.

Quick Notes

Challenges:

- ✓ Equipment Breakage
- ✓ High Tone
- ✓ Extension
- ✓ Pain & Tolerance

Areas affected:

- ✓ Head
- ✓ Back
- ✓ Trunk
- ✓ Knees
- ✓ Feet

Equipment Used:

- ✓ [Dynamic Rocker Back](#)
- ✓ [Dynamic Footrests](#)
- ✓ [Dynamic Head Support](#)

Extension and Comfort

Since using a Seating Dynamics back and dynamic footrests, Robert does not fight the wheelchair as much. He looks like he uses less force and energy and is more comfortable. The family also likes to take road trips in their accessible van. Dynamic Seating has increased Robert's sitting tolerance during these rides and his parents don't have to worry about something breaking while they are away from home.

Robert, although having very strong extensor tone, also has underlying low tone. This combination of muscle tone can be challenging to address in a wheelchair seating system. Mary Elizabeth notes, "Dynamic Seating has supported his fluctuating muscle tone very well."

Jeff

Robert's Dad Los Angeles, CA

"His positioning in the chair is much better than what we have been able to provide in the past. This facilitates his endurance, his comfort, and his ability to use augmentative communication devices. He seems more relaxed in his body, and therefore able to be more attentive with his mind. The fact that the Rocker Back reduces wheelchair breakages saves us time and emotional energy, gives us one less thing to stress over, and actually allows us to go enjoy life more often."

Function

The family locks the Dynamic Rocker Back during feeding and transportation. Overall, Jeffery has noticed that Robert is more stable which, in combination with reduced fighting against the seating system, helps him to be as functional as possible.

Results

As Jeff states, "The main take away for our family is that Robert has less breakdowns. This is huge. His breakdowns were frequent and unexpected." Dynamic Seating has allowed Robert and his family to live life without life revolving around his wheelchair. And that's what it's all about, right?

About the Author

Michelle Lange is an occupational therapist with 30 years of experience and has been in private practice, Access to Independence, for over 10 years. She is a well-respected lecturer, both nationally and internationally and has authored numerous texts, chapters, and articles. She is the co-editor of Seating and Wheeled Mobility: a clinical resource guide, editor of Fundamentals in Assistive Technology, 4th ed., NRRTS Continuing Education Curriculum Coordinator and Clinical Editor of Directions magazine. Michelle is a RESNA Fellow and member of the Clinician Task Force. Michelle is a certified ATP, certified SMS and is a Senior Disability Analyst of the ABDA.
