



# IM Makes Living with Autism Easier!

See how this program was vital to Marcus's outcomes.



**Marcus** is a 12-year-old boy with high functioning autism who returned to occupational therapy after a break of several years. He was doing well in school but he had trouble with daily living activities such as:

- Unable to dress himself.
- Poor handwriting.
- Was unable to wash his hair by himself.
- He chewed his food in the front of his mouth, which affected his diet.
- He rarely looks at others while speaking.
- He used single word conversations
- He walked with a very wide gait (80° deviation)
- He lacked the ability to plan and execute movements.

Given these problems, Mark started Interactive Metronome®(IM) therapy twice a week for 30 minute sessions.

IM is a researched-based program that provides a structured, goal-oriented process that challenges the patient to synchronize whole-body exercises to a precise computer-generated reference beat. The patient attempts to match the rhythmic beat with repetitive motor actions. An auditory-visual guidance system provides immediate feedback measured in milliseconds (ms), and a score is provided. Over the course of the training, the patient sees improvements in stronger motor control and coordination, enhanced balance and gait, and improved language and cognition.

He started each session with a few minutes in the ball pit to help him relax and self-organize. He then did 10 minutes of IM, took a short break on a swing or trampoline and then a final 10 minutes of IM. As his skills improved, he did 20 minutes of IM and then practiced dressing skills or handwriting.

The IM program had profound effects on Mark. He developed a self-awareness and motivation that led to greater independence. Most prominent gains of the program were:

- He learned to regulate his shower temperature.
- He improved in washing his hair by himself.
- He took an interest in outside activities.
- He began to talk about what he did.
- He displayed a good sense of humor.
- He learned how to dress himself.
- He learned how to chew with his whole mouth and his diet improved.
- His wide stance improved, so that his feet were better aligned by 5-10 degrees.
- He made improvements on motor planning and postural control.

After 19,000 repetitions, therapy took a new direction. It was time for Mark to learn a variety of new skills through exercise and repetition.

The IM program was vital to Marcus's outcomes. It produced incredible gains that improved his physical, mental, and social development.

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