

Musician gets his groove back



ANDY MARTIN
WITH
ROCCO AND HIS SAINTS

Tampa Bay area musician Andy Martin is not your typical performer. He's been a professional musician since age 13. Now in his 70s, all that rockin' n' rollin' might have led to his need for a total hip replacement.

He worries how he can get back to his weekly gig at Cricketers British Pub and Restaurant in Dunedin, Florida. There he's known as Mr. Lucky to his fans and fellow performers.

It might be a name that has served him well. He has a knack for being at the right place and right time. Back in 1957, he had his 15 minutes of fame when he was palling around with Jerry Lee Lewis, Frankie Avalon and Dick Clark. They were relationships he developed during his opening scene performance in the movie, "Jamboree."

Good friends and timing coupled with musical talents and legs that could keep the beat were Martin's mainstays.

But gravity put a damper on his life after hip surgery. Putting weight onto a painful hip and forcing heaviness onto a post-surgical joint required Martin to relent to a walker.

When he was told he could ditch the walker and soon get back on stage, he was relieved. All it took was patented gravity know-how from NASA. The same technology that teaches astronauts how to walk on the moon is now a therapeutic option on Earth.

For Martin, it meant he could start post-surgical hip therapy earlier because he could offset weight and gravity.

During an afternoon therapy session, Martin had to don a pair of therapy provided neoprene shorts and was assisted into a lower body air pressure tank. A compartmentalized air bag was pulled up to his waist and it was zipped around his torso to create an airtight seal.

Martin was ready to do his “moon” walk by being encircled in a flexible air chamber. His therapist Cyndi Robbins, PTA, calibrated the machine in order to levitate Martin to the desired amount of unloaded weight.



With calculation, the chamber inflates and the air pressure inside creates upward lift. Martin floats up and off of gravity.

He says that while on the treadmill he was surprised to walk without pain. Therapy reports that the air pressure supports his weak and sore muscles while at the same time giving resistance to stronger muscles. It's similar to being in a pool. Or in this case, it's like walking on the lunar surface.

After six weeks of therapy at Belleair Health Care Center, located at 1150 Ponce De Leon Blvd., in Clearwater, Florida, Martin is performing live shows again. He's able to get back to his former life and musical performances.