Southpaw swings

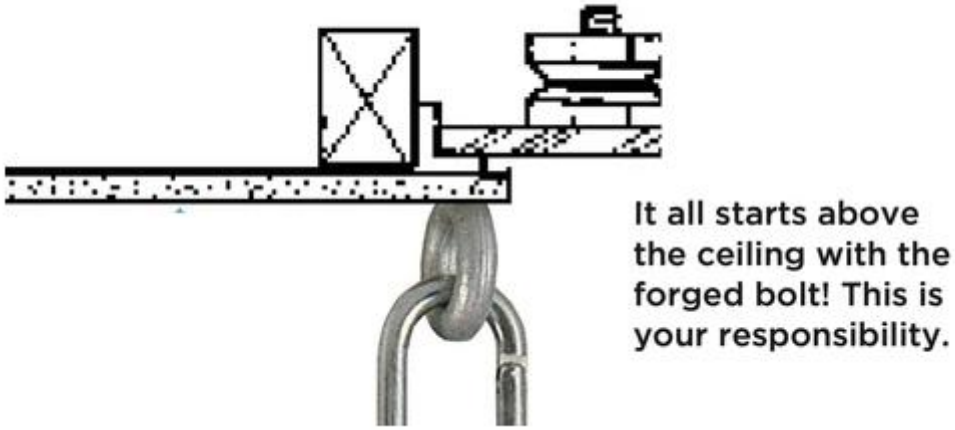
Safety & Maintenance

Committed to safety for clients and therapists

Sensory integration therapy is not inherently dangerous, but every activity carries certain risks. By taking precautions, most hazards can be eliminated. Southpaw is committed to helping customers develop a comprehensive safety strategy. We believe that safety elements include, among other things, the layout of the clinic or therapy room, the installation of ceiling eyebolts according to the correct specifications, the implementation of a systematic inspection program for equipment, and the use of suitable mats and personal protection.

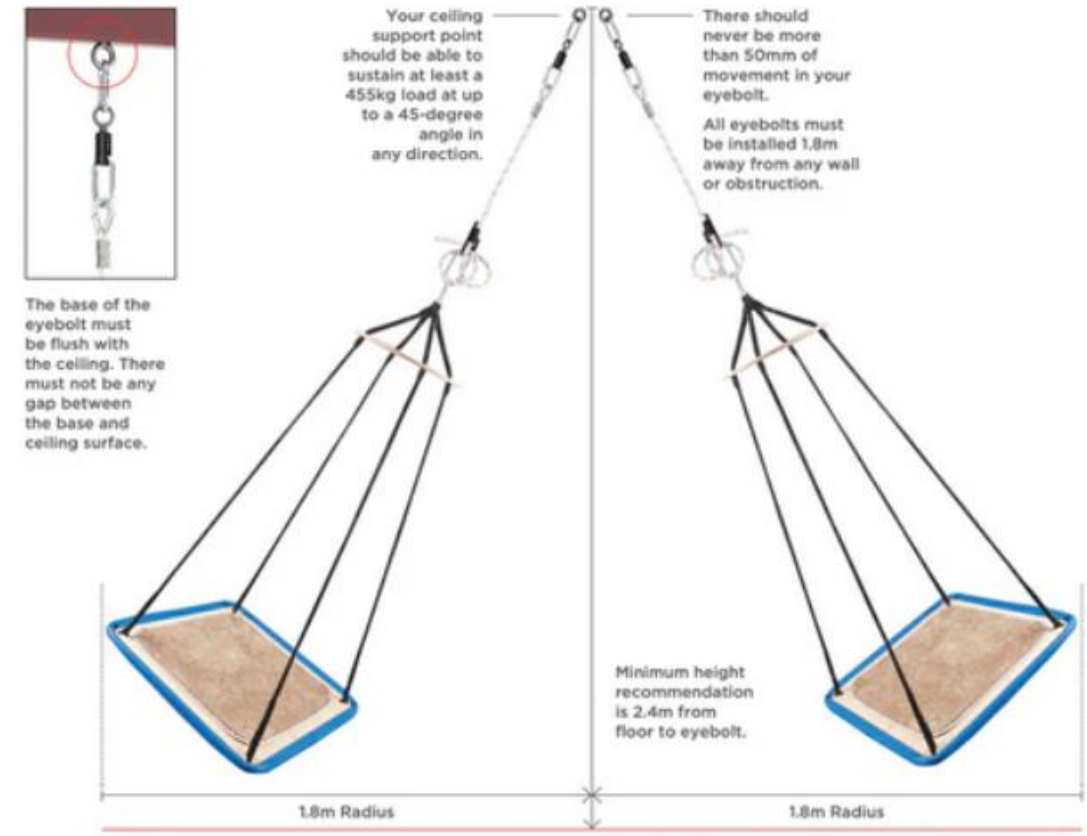
Ceiling Support

Everything starts above the ceiling with the forged bolt — this falls under your responsibility.
The installation of ceiling eyebolts must meet the correct specifications.
We always recommend having the ceiling tested by a structural engineer to ensure that it can support the appropriate working loads.



The ceiling support should be designed for the most demanding conditions, not just the current situation. The anchor point in the ceiling must meet the following standards regardless of the target group or the way therapy is carried out.

The ceiling support must be able to sustain a working load of at least 450 kg, at an angle of up to 45 degrees in any direction, regardless of the ceiling structure. Keep in mind that the forces acting on the ceiling eyebolt during therapy activities are not always directly downward. Even a slight swinging motion of the equipment changes the angle of the forces on the attachment point. Movement of the eyebolt must not exceed 6.35 mm, even at the specified 450 kg load at a 45-degree angle.



Movement of the eyebolt greater than 6.35 mm or any rotation under load is **UNSAFE**.

WARNING! Eyebolts wear with use and must be inspected regularly.

Stop using an eyebolt immediately and replace it as soon as wear becomes visible. Never allow wear to exceed 30%. For ceiling support, following the inspection and maintenance checklist supplied with the product is even more crucial, especially when parts are located above a drop ceiling. In these cases, loose or worn parts are usually only detected during a scheduled inspection.

Assistance in choosing the correct ceiling support

Before purchasing or performing any swing or vestibular activity, it is important that your ceiling suspension system is correctly set up. This depends mainly on the construction of your ceiling/building and the available space. Not every ceiling is suitable for hanging swings, as different materials have different properties.

For all suspension systems used in your space, we recommend having the ceiling tested by a structural engineer to ensure that it can support the appropriate working loads.

For those who cannot install a fixed suspension point in their space or want more flexibility, it may be worth considering our suspension frames. These do not affect the building's structure and can be moved or dismantled if needed.

In addition, for research and clinical purposes within occupational therapy that involves sensory integration, it is important that your space meets the theory and principles developed by Dr. A. Jean Ayres (Schaff, R. & Mailloux, Z. *Clinician's Guide for Implementing Ayres Sensory Integration*). According to these guidelines, there must be at least three suspension points in the room, ideally evenly spaced with a distance of about 90 cm to 120 cm between each point.

Working Load

The working load is the combined weight of the equipment, the child and/or the therapist on it, and the additional weight generated by movement. This is not the weight at which the equipment will break, but the maximum load it can sustainably carry.

To illustrate: if a person weighing 68 kg stands on a scale, it will display 68 kg. But if the same person jumps on the scale, the reading will temporarily be much higher. This extra weight caused by movement is an important factor when determining the working load applied to the equipment.

Mats

Because safety always comes first, choosing the right mats should be carefully considered in advance. Regardless of the application, we recommend using as many high-quality, thick mats as your budget allows.

When purchasing mats, it is important to consider the following questions:

- What types of suspended activities do your clients perform?
- Do the activities involve linear swinging, rotation, or a combination?
- Do clients swing very high?
- Where do the activities take place?

Answering these questions will give you a good idea of the floor area that needs to be covered and the necessary mat thickness. The Nenko team is always available to advise you in making the right choice.

Develop a comprehensive 3-step inspection and maintenance program

Therapy equipment is used intensively. Southpaw takes this into account by using the best materials when designing products. However, even the most durable equipment has a limited lifespan.

In the rare cases of equipment failure we have seen in recent years, most defects were caused by completely worn-out parts, such as breaking eyebolts or fraying ropes. The vast majority of these defects can be completely prevented by simple, regular inspections and maintenance.

1. Training

All therapists using the equipment must be familiar with the instruction manual and the maintenance checklist supplied with every Southpaw product.

Both documents contain a list of all parts, installation procedures (if applicable), safety instructions, checkpoints, and guidelines for cleaning and storage. Ensure these documents are stored in a location that is easily accessible and known to all staff.

2. Know what to inspect
As mentioned earlier, every Southpaw product comes with an instruction manual and a maintenance checklist. The instruction manual specifies the parts to be checked and the inspection intervals. Following these guidelines allows you to identify wear before it becomes a safety hazard.
In addition to the specific checkpoints on the checklist, therapists should always inspect the equipment as a whole before and after each use. The previous user may have adjusted or reconfigured something, making the equipment unsuitable or unsafe for the next person.

3. Main inspection schedule
Setting up a regular inspection and maintenance schedule is one of the most important steps in ensuring the safety of equipment, therapists, and clients.

A main inspection schedule is very detailed and includes a comprehensive list of all items to be inspected, along with the relevant instruction manuals and checklists, as well as the dates each inspection should take place. The schedule should clearly indicate which groups or individuals are responsible for each task.

The importance of well-planned and periodic maintenance cannot be overstated.