**ABSTRACT**

Reduction of range of motion in the elbow joint is common with such conditions as contracture, osteoarthritis, bone fracture, connective tissue tearing. These conditions can be debilitating and make it difficult for an individual to perform simple activities of daily life. Proper rehabilitation requires the use of predetermined loads placed upon the joint, as well as restriction against high loads at mechanically stressful joint angles. The purpose of this experiment is to use measured EMG values to accurately predict the amount of force that can be generated at any given joint angle. This was accomplished by testing the EMG values of the muscle using known joint angles and force values imparted upon the palm of the hand. Using the data points collected, a correlation curve was created. A MATLAB program was used to estimate the possible force production output using the inputs of the EMG values and a given joint angle. This program will be an effective tool that will allow athletes, physicians, and occupational therapists to rehabilitate injuries as well as prevent future injuries.

**METHODS**

An EMG sensor placed on the muscle belly of the biceps brachii of the right arm was used to collect data. A strain gauge was used to collect mechanical data on the amount of force being exerted at the palm of the hand.

**EMG Sensor:**

EMG signals are the electric currents that pass through a muscle when it is contracted. When a muscle is contracted, the brain sends electrical impulses through the nervous system via motor neurons. These signals arrive at the muscle and cause depolarization; the more motor units that are recruited, the greater the electric current that flows through the muscle. The amplitude of the current, and therefore the magnitude of muscle fiber activation, is measured through the skin by the EMG sensor in millivolts (mV). From the data, the RMS value was obtained at an interval of 1 second after target force was reached.

**Strain Gauge Setup:**

The strain gauge setup consisted of a Bluetooth sensor, upon which 2 carabiners were attached at either end. One was connected to a wooden bar against which the subject would provide resistance with the palm of their hand. The other was connected to a looped length of rope that was anchored to the floor by the subject’s foot. The subject took hold of the wooden bar in the palm of their fully supinated arm against which the joint cannot or should not be produced at another. According to an article in the Oxford academic neurology journal, “Brain,” many stroke patients have weakness in a selective range of motion in a muscle. This study aims to analyze and predict the magnitude of myoelectric activation that occurs in the muscle unit with respect to the amount of force that is physically transferred through the joint, to the point of application. This has applications in diagnosis and treatment of orthopedic and neurological conditions. It also has the potential to serve as a useful training tool for athletes. A physician may use this to determine that a stroke patient has weakness in a specific angle that is not present in the rest of the range of motion. It could also help diagnose physiological conditions that prevent force from being transmitted through the joint, such as a torn biceps tendon. Alternatively, an athlete may find that their production of force at a specific range of motion is not equivalent to the amount of force they would be expected to produce with their tested EMG values, this would indicate an increase in training at the weaker joint angles to further develop motor recruitment patterns.

**RESULTS**

One major muscle was analyzed for the elbow flexion: the biceps brachii. The results confirm several hypotheses that had formed prior to conducting the experiment:

1. Increased force of flexion of the elbow positively correlates to increased recruitment of the biceps brachii muscle, evidenced by increased voltage amplitude. Figure 3 demonstrates the EMG output of gradually increasing, then sustained flexion of the muscle.

2. There is a similar, strong positive correlation between the 3 elbow angles tested; the line of best fit that was used to relate the data points shows a similar result in all 3 plots. However, each individual will have different muscle recruitment patterns, meaning that there will be a varying range of amplitudes that can result from the force a muscle exerts. Therefore, it is necessary to collect data from each individual in order to obtain a result that can be used to accurately predict force output.

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**REFERENCES**
