

Cartier

WOMEN'S INITIATIVE



2019 FINALIST FOR EUROPE

ZINEB AGOUMI

EzyGain - FRANCE

www.ezygain.com

“We focused on a very simple and compact design to be easier to set up and use than our competitors.”

In 2015, when Zineb Agoumi was studying business and engineering, her grandmother fell ill and started to experience difficulty walking. “She suffered several falls in her home and passed away that same year,” Zineb recalls. “It motivated me to develop a product to help people to learn to walk safely.”

An occasion to do just that came when she met Thierry Albert, an experienced doctor in physiotherapy who was invited to speak at her university. “Thierry had patented a gait rehabilitation device that would fit into small clinics and even people’s homes,” says Zineb. The opportunity was too good to miss. The two teamed up, brought in a designer and another engineer, and started work on developing Thierry’s machine, taking their first entrepreneurial steps while Zineb was still at university.

Zineb started by visiting retirement homes and rehabilitation centres to see what was on offer. “Most gait rehabilitation machines are very large and bulky, not to mention expensive,” she says. Another option is parallel bars, but these can be difficult to handle for fragile patients who need extra support or lack a good grip. Conscious that there was a real need in the market for a more compact and affordable product, Zineb incorporated Ezygain in 2016 to bring their device to market.

MADE IN FRANCE

Ezygain branched into digital to develop a second connected prototype. By 2017 the company was starting to gain awards and recognition, including the James Dyson Award for ease of use, won by their designer, Felix Botella. In late 2017 they received medical certification for their product and delivered the very first device to a retirement home near Paris. Today Ezygain has sold 60 devices, all made in France, and raised over \$ 1.3 million in equity funding.

“One of the things about being an entrepreneur is living a constant emotional rollercoaster, from great highs to big lows, it’s challenging but also exciting!”

WEIGHT OFF THE FEET

Its product, the ema®, is a space-saving gait rehabilitation device that lightens patients’ weight by lifting and supporting them from the pelvis, not – as with other devices – from the torso. This enables the most fragile or unstable patients to use it with ease and no need to grip any handles or bars, leaving their hands free to click on the connected Ezygain tablet. Fitted with the EzyGain app, it offers them options to accompany their rehabilitation session, from playing a game that helps walking and balance performance to visiting a virtual art gallery or museum or being led around a quaint seaside town, keeping them engaged and entertained.

On the medical side, the app collects walking and balance analytics that provide physiotherapists and doctors with objective results. It also gives patients biofeedback exercises that make them an active player in their rehabilitation process. Testimonials from patients are heartening and enlightening. Contrary to the frailty which their difficulty with walking seems to portray, they are galvanised by the experience and find it highly motivating.

While the elderly of course make up a large part of those who benefit from ema®, it serves many other groups as well. People recovering from strokes or with multiple sclerosis, amputees needing to exercise their remaining limb, children with cerebral palsy... Ezygain’s compact size and affordable price tag put it within reach of smaller local rehabilitation clinics and retirement homes, helping more people to tread new ground.

“If your company grows, you will change the world.”



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