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Yaskawa, Midea launching nursing-care robot business in China

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Japan's Yaskawa Electric and China's Midea Group will begin by selling a stationary bicycle-like pedaling machine through a local joint venture at the end of this month.



With an eye on China's rapidly aging population, a Japanese industrial robotics maker and a Chinese home appliance company are joining to develop specialized equipment for elderly people and physical therapy patients.

Japan's Yaskawa Electric and China's Midea Group will begin by selling a stationary bicycle-like pedaling machine through a local joint venture at the end of this month. The device will let users exercise their legs and arms to rebuild physical functions. It will have variable resistance settings to match the strength of the users.

Yaskawa provided motor-control technology that it developed for its industrial robots, while Midea contributed to product design based on its experience with home appliances. The Chinese company will also make use of its sales network. The machine will be priced around 80,000 yuan ($11,600) and sold to hospitals and care facilities across China.

Yaskawa and Midea aim to be selling 10 to 15 products by 2019, including exercise equipment that can be used lying down and a toilet system for bedridden patients. They hope for 500 million yen to 600 million yen ($4.47 million to $5.36 million) in sales from such equipment in fiscal 2018.