



Physical Therapy

Overview

Physical therapy is an important part of a nonsurgical approach to maintain, restore, and improve overall physical health. Pain-free mobility is crucial for physical independence, earning a living, quality of life and well being. Working with a doctor, a physical therapist (PT) can help patients who have suffered an injury, disease, or those recovering from surgery.

What is physical therapy?

Physical therapists (PT) are health care professionals who offer cost-effective treatment that improves mobility and relieves pain, reduces the need for surgery and prescription drugs, and allows patients to participate in a recovery plan designed for their specific needs. Research has shown that inactivity weakens the muscles that support the spine, and can prolong recovery or even make some conditions worse.

PTs evaluate an individual's movement, interaction of all parts of the body, and body types. They work in a variety of settings and with a variety of healthcare providers. Some PTs specialize in spine rehabilitation or in neurologic rehabilitation such as stroke, concussion and Parkinson's.

How can physical therapy help me?

Physical therapy can help restore function, relieve pain, improve mobility, decrease the use of pain medications, and potentially avoid surgery. Receiving physical therapy is rarely a passive activity, and participating in your own recovery can be empowering. Treatments may include:

- Exercises to stretch and strengthen muscles, and improve endurance and balance
- Manual therapies such as soft tissue massage, joint mobilization, stretching and traction
- Therapeutic exercises

- Pain relief therapies such as electric stimulation, ultrasound, mechanical traction and heat/cold treatments
- Education on posture and body mechanics at work to prevent re-injury

About your office visit

After reviewing your medical history, the physical therapist will evaluate your strength, range of motion, balance, coordination, posture, and body mechanics. The PT will develop a treatment plan unique to your condition.

A physical therapist assistant may help with the delivery of this specifically designed program. The goal is to improve function in your daily activities. The patient's progress is carefully tracked and reported to the referring physician.

What training do physical therapists have?

Physical Therapists (PT) have earned a bachelor's, master's or doctorate degree in physical therapy. National and state board examinations are required for licensing and ongoing certification.

Physical Therapist Assistants (PTA) have an associate degree from an accredited PTA program. PTAs must pass the national examination for licensing and certification. PTAs work under the direction of a Physical Therapist.

Finding a physical therapist

Consult with your doctor and/or healthcare coordinator to choose a PT who may best meet your treatment needs.

Sources & links

If you have questions, please contact Springfield Neurological and Spine Institute at 417-885-3888.

Links

www.moveforwardpt.com
www.neuropt.org



updated > 9.2018
reviewed by > Lisa Cleveland, PT, Mayfield Clinic, Cincinnati, Ohio

Mayfield Certified Health Info materials are written and developed by the Mayfield Clinic. We comply with the HONcode standard for trustworthy health information. This information is not intended to replace the medical advice of your health care provider. © Mayfield Clinic 1998-2018.