

BACK PAIN

Physical Therapy



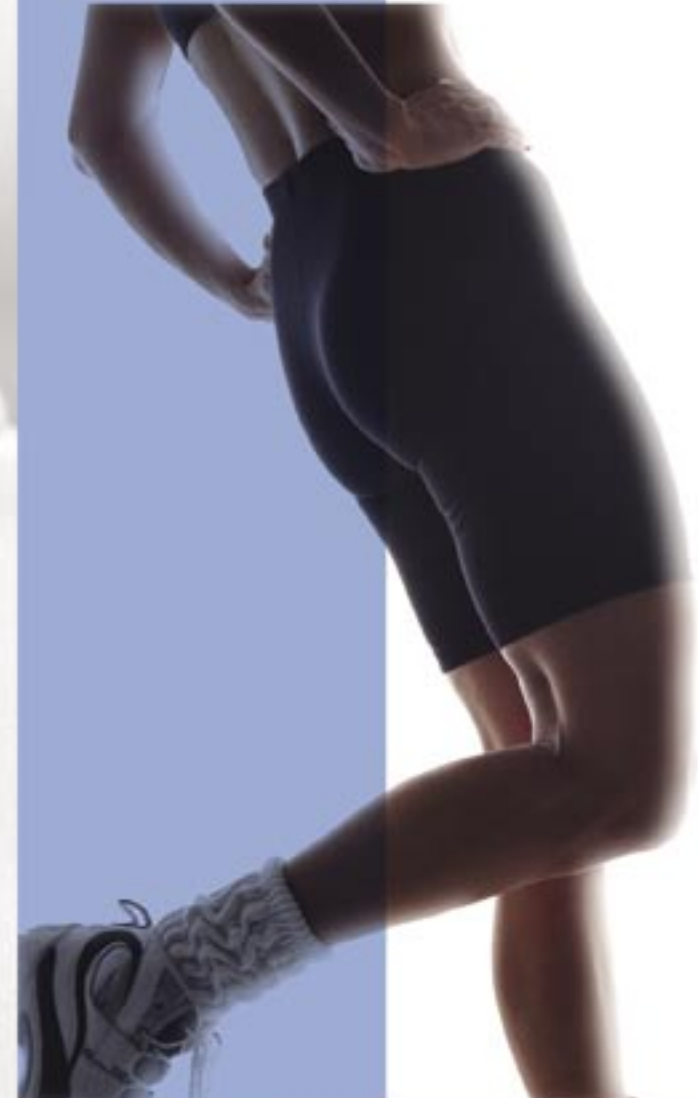
Definition

The art and science of eradicating or easing pain and improving bodily function by direct physical means, both hands-on and conservative modalities without the use of drugs.

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Types of Back Injuries You Might Be Referred to a PT For:

1. **“Disc bulges,” “ruptured discs” and “slipped discs”** are some of the terminology used for problems with the disc in the spine. The disc is a jelly-like substance that acts as a shock-absorber between the vertebra (bones in the spine). If the disc is damaged it can push out and put pressure on a nerve or the spinal cord itself and can be very painful.

2. **“Pinched nerve”** means that something is putting pressure on the nerve causing pain and irritation. Usually the pressure is caused by a disc, but it can also be from other things such as a spasm in a muscle next to the nerve.

3. **“Joint Irritation”** is an inflammation in the joints in the spine (called facet joints). The joints swell and become painful to move. This can occur after spending prolonged amounts of time in awkward positions or sudden traumatic movements.

4. **“Arthritis”** is a normal aging (wearing out) process of the body. But sometimes it can become painful as the joints get irritated and inflamed.

5. **“Muscle spasms”** are basically muscles that have tightened up and haven't let go or relaxed. These spasms can be very painful. Muscles that have not been properly conditioned for the work they are doing are more susceptible to this.

Why Try Physical Therapy First?

Physical therapists are specialists who are highly trained in how your back muscles and spinal joints are supposed to work for you.

The goals of physical therapy are to restore the normal motion, flexibility and strength in the muscles and joints to get them to move as freely as possible. As a result, you not only function better but have reduced pain and discomfort.

What To Do Before Your PT Appointment?

- A. Follow any advice your Doctor gives you.
- B. Rest as much as possible to give your back a chance to heal, being careful of slumped, bent posture.
- C. Apply ice to reduce any spasms, to reduce the pain and any swelling in the area.
- D. Avoid heavy lifting, twisting and bending over from the waist. All of these can cause more injury and prevent healing.

What To Expect at Your First PT Visit?

Paperwork: On your first visit to our clinic there will be some paperwork to complete so that we can bill your insurance carrier appropriately and efficiently. With this done in the very beginning you can concentrate on getting better.

Evaluation: Also on your first visit, your physical therapist will be doing a full evaluation of your physical situation. What the PT will be looking for is any abnormal postures or loss of normal motion, flexibility or strength in the affected area and surrounding areas. The PT will evaluate how this is affecting the function of your whole body during daily activities including work tasks. This initial evaluation can take up to an hour or in some cases longer.

Proper attire: You should come dressed so that you can move about as comfortably as possible whether standing, sitting or lying down.



What Treatment To Expect?

1. **Exercises** will be used to aid your recovery. The goal is to improve your body's ability to hold onto the changes the therapy makes, to stabilize and support your spine and make you strong and flexible. Exercises help you get back to a level of daily activity that restores your quality of life at home and at work.

Your physical therapist will be designing your exercise program to accomplish all the benefits that you need.

2. **Hands-On Manual Therapy Techniques** are very specialized techniques done by physical therapists using their hands in very precise ways to relax muscles in spasms, to lengthen tight muscles, to restore balance to the muscles in the area and to improve the motion of the small joints in the spine and pelvis area.

3. **Posture and/or body mechanics education** to help you use safer positioning of your body during daily activities. This can not only aid in your recovery but can help you prevent further injury in the future.

4. **Modalities** (or the use of heat, cold and electricity, etc.) may be used to help decrease the pain you are experiencing, improve circulation and/or help the muscles relax. This is usually done as a preparation for doing exercises or activities to improve strength and flexibility.