

## Physical Therapy

When it comes to treating musculoskeletal problems, physical therapy is at the forefront of offering exceptional pain relief. The treatment is performed by licensed healthcare professionals who offer treatment for sciatica, whiplash, degenerative arthritis, neck and back pain, and post-surgical therapy after procedures such as total knee or hip replacement.



### What kind of treatments do physical therapists provide?

Physical therapy clinics work hard to improve coordination, mobility, balance flexibility and strength of patient problem areas.

Treatments used by physical therapists to accomplish these goals are individualized to patients and may include active and passive exercises, along with stretching and stabilization exercises as well. Often times, PT clinics use weightlifting and core strengthening programs to reach goals of pain relief. The best physical therapy clinics offer patients a home treatment program as well, so that treatment can be continued after the official sessions are completed.

When you think about it, PT sessions are administered a few times a week. However, patients have the opportunity to perform exercises daily, so a home program can continue the benefits that are begun in the official treatment sessions.

### What types of problems do physical therapy clinics treat?

The conditions that benefit from physical therapy are broad and include such things as rehab after a broken bone or total joint replacement surgery.

It may also include ongoing treatment after a stroke, or to combat the balance issues of Parkinson's disease. When individual is in a car accident and has whiplash or low back pain as a result, physical therapy can help prevent the acute pain from becoming chronic.

Complicated problems like RSD or failed back surgery that are not amenable to further surgery may achieve an excellent baseline of pain relief with physical therapy at a clinic.

### Can I pick the physical therapy clinic that I want to go to?

Yes you can. California is a direct access state so it is not always necessary to have a referral from a doctor.

Traditionally, patients needed a physician referral to get into a physical therapy clinic. This is no longer the case, and most patients can choose their own physical therapy clinic. There are a few caveats, one of which is to make sure the clinic accepts your brand of insurance.

### **How many physical therapy sessions will I need to attend?**

On average, patients undergo about a dozen visits at physical therapy clinics to achieve a satisfactory baseline of pain control. This will vary according to a patient's situation.



After a total knee replacement, it may take 6 to 12 weeks of physical therapy visits to achieve appropriate range of motion and strength. This may be more like 30 visits as opposed to a dozen. On the other end of the spectrum would be the person having acute back pain who undergoes a few physical therapy sessions along with receiving pain medication and trigger point injections. It may take only a few sessions to achieve satisfactory pain relief for that individual.

### **What should I wear to my physical therapy visits?**

The best attire for your physical therapy sessions is loose fitting clothing that will allow free range of motion of the extremity being treated. Also a change of clothing is a good idea, as most active physical therapy sessions result in perspiration.

### **Will my physical therapy sessions be painful?**

Physical therapy sessions should never be exceptionally painful. However, it will be some discomfort as that is how physical therapy is designed to achieve increased range of motion and strength along with decreasing pain.

It is very normal to have some soreness after physical therapy treatments. If physical therapy is causing you significant pain and making your situation worse, that is a sign that either pain management injections for medication should be added to your regimen, or the physical therapy exercises should be altered so that pain is decreased while benefits are still achieved.