

# PREPARE FOR YOUR VISIT WITH A OPTIMAL PHYSICAL THERAPY

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Physical therapists are highly educated, licensed health care providers. They examine, evaluate, and treat people whose health conditions may limit their ability to move and function. Physical therapists help people maintain, improve, or restore mobility. Physical therapy treatment can help you:

- Reduce and manage pain.
- Avoid the long-term use of prescription opioids and their side effects.
- Prevent or postpone the need for surgery for many conditions.
- Restore function.

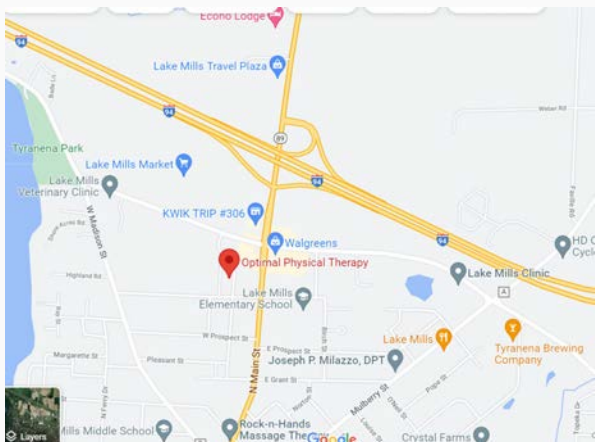
Physical therapists are movement experts who improve quality of life through hands-on care, patient education, and prescribed movement. You can make an appointment for an evaluation with a physical therapist without a doctor's referral.

Here are some things you can do to get the most out of your first visit with Optimal Physical Therapy.

## BEFORE YOUR VISIT

Make a list of any questions you have and want to ask your physical therapist. Write down any symptoms you've been having and for how long. If you have more than one area of symptoms, begin with the one that bothers you the most. Describe whether your pain or symptoms are:

- Better or worse with specific movements, activities, or positions such as sitting or standing.
- More noticeable at certain times of the day.
- Relieved or made worse by resting or a specific task or activity.
- Write down key information about your medical history, even if it seems unrelated. For example:
  - List all prescribed and over-the-counter medicines you take or have taken within the last month. Don't forget to include any vitamins and supplements you take.
  - Make a note of any relevant personal information. Include things that you believe might be linked to your condition, such as:
    - Recent stressful events.
    - Injuries.
    - Incidents or accidents.
    - Your home or work environment.
    - List any medical conditions of your parents or siblings.
- Ask a family member or trusted friend to go with you to your appointment. They can help you remember details from your health history and take notes to help you remember what was discussed during your visit.
- If you wear glasses or use a hearing aid, take them with you. Tell your physical therapist and clinic staff if you have a hard time seeing or hearing.
- Take any lab, imaging, or reports from other health care providers with you that are related to your medical history or current condition.
- Bring a list of your doctors and other health care providers. Your physical therapist can discuss their findings and your progress with them. Physical therapists partner with other health care providers to ensure you get the best possible care.
- When you make your appointment, ask whether you should wear or bring a certain type of clothing for your first visit. Don't wear clothing that doesn't stretch. Your physical therapist may have you take part in treatment activities during your first session.



# FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- Carefully review our financial policy. If you do not receive it at your first appointment, ask for a copy. If anything is unclear, ask questions or ask for someone to explain the policy to you before starting treatment.
- Optimal Physical Therapy is a provider with most major insurance companies. As a courtesy, we will verify physical therapy benefits prior to your initial evaluation and obtain authorization if needed. We file insurance claims for each date of service and claims are reviewed and reimbursed according to the terms of your insurance policy. You will be informed of your financial responsibility at your first appointment. All Co-pays or Co-insurance is expected at CHECK-IN for each appointment. Billing is managed by WebPT Billing Services.
- The physical therapy clinic will ask you to sign the financial agreement. Read it carefully and ask questions if anything is unclear.
- The clinic staff will request payment of any deductibles and copayments before or after each visit. Paying these at the time of service will help you better manage health care costs and avoid a large bill after treatment ends.
- If you need to change how often you have physical therapy for financial reasons, discuss this with your physical therapist. They can explore options and develop a workable plan to help you get the care you need.
- If you change or lose your insurance coverage, be sure to inform your physical therapist and the clinic's front office staff.

# WHAT TO EXPECT AT YOUR FIRST VISIT

Your physical therapist will begin by asking you lots of questions about your health. These will include specific questions about your condition and any symptoms that led you to see them. The details you give will help your physical therapist assess whether you are likely to benefit from physical therapy. It also will help them choose the treatments that are most likely to help YOU..

Your physical therapist also will ask you specific questions about your home or work setting, your health habits and activity level, and your leisure and sports interests. Their goal is to help you become as active and independent as possible and return to the activities you enjoy.

Your physical therapist will perform a detailed exam. Depending on your symptoms and condition, your physical therapist may evaluate your:

- Strength.
- Flexibility.
- Balance.
- Coordination.
- Posture.
- Blood pressure.
- Heart and respiration rates.

Your physical therapist may use their hands to examine or feel on or around the area of concern. They also will assess the motion and function of your joints, muscles, and other tissues.

Your physical therapist also may check:

- How you walk (your gait).
- How you get up from a lying position or get in and out of a chair (functional activities).
- How you use your body for certain activities, such as bending and lifting (body mechanics).

Your physical therapist will work with you to determine your goals for physical therapy. Then, they will create a treatment plan for your specific condition and goals. In many cases, the physical therapist will diagnose your condition and begin treatment right away.

A main goal of treatment is to improve or maintain your ability to do daily tasks and activities. Your physical therapist may address pain, swelling, weakness, and limited motion to help you reach this goal. They will check your response to each treatment and make changes as often as needed. Physical therapy treatment also may speed your recovery.

Education is an important aspect of your physical therapy treatment. Your physical therapist may teach you special exercises to do at home. They also may show you different ways to do your work and home activities. The goal is to lessen or get rid of the problem believed to be the reason for your pain, strain, or injury and show you ways to stay healthy.

Your physical therapist will assess your need for special equipment. For example, they may suggest special footwear, splints, or crutches. They also may advise that you use special devices to help make your home a safer place for you, especially if they find that you are at an increased risk of falling. They will determine what equipment you need based on your situation. They may either provide it for you or tell you where you can find it. If you do need special equipment, your physical therapist can show you how to use it properly.

Your physical therapist will share important information with your doctor and other health care providers at your request.

Your physical therapist will recheck your progress often throughout your plan of care. They will work with you to plan for your discharge from physical therapy when you are ready. Make sure to talk with your physical therapist about what to do if you have questions after discharge or if your symptoms or condition worsens.

Your physical therapy visit may include working with a physical therapist assistant on exercises prescribed by your physical therapist. Physical therapists and PTAs work together and with other health care providers to make sure you get the care you need.

# GETTING THE MOST OUT OF PHYSICAL THERAPY

You will get out of your physical therapy sessions what you put into them. It will take a certain amount of effort on your part, as agreed between you and your physical therapist, to get the most benefit from each session. Here are four tips to help you get the most out of physical therapy:

## 1. Keep Your Appointments

- Arrive for your sessions on time or a few minutes early. Being late may reduce your one-on-one time with your physical therapist and affect other patients.
- Engage in the discussion to decide how often you will see your physical therapist and determine your treatment goals. Then, work with your physical therapist to meet your goals.
- Attend your appointments. Missing appointments can delay your recovery. Failing to show without canceling in advance may result in a fee and disrupts the physical therapist's schedule. If an emergency keeps you from going, try to give notice as soon as possible. Review the facility's financial and cancellation policy before you begin treatment.
- If you plan to stop therapy or change how often you receive treatment for personal or financial reasons, discuss this with your physical therapist.

## 2. Follow Your Physical Therapist's Instructions

It is essential to follow your physical therapist's guidance. They may recommend that you:

- Modify an activity.
- Limit or restrict the use of a specific body part (such as reducing weight on one leg while walking).
- Avoid certain movements.

Ignoring these precautions may lead to injury or delay your recovery.

If your physical therapist provides special devices (splints, walkers, canes, or braces) for home use, follow the exact usage instructions they give you. Be sure to ask questions if you are unclear. Incorrect use may be harmful.

Your physical therapist also may recommend making changes in your home for your safety, such as:

- Removing throw rugs.
- Rearranging furniture.
- Setting up safety rails.

## 3. Do Your Home Exercise Program

Doing your home program as often as prescribed by your physical therapist is essential to your recovery. If the instructions are unclear, ask your physical therapist to explain them to you. Only do exercises that your physical therapist prescribed. Follow their instructions for:

- How often (times per week).
- How many times (repetitions).
- The specific resistance (weight in pounds or band color).

More is not always better and may cause injury!

## 4. Continue Your After-Care Plan

After you have finished formal physical therapy, you'll want to keep the gains you made. Make sure to continue your home exercise plan.

Follow all instructions given to you by your physical therapist after you are discharged.

### Changes in Your Physical Therapy Setting

Your health care team may suggest that you transfer from one setting to another to continue recovery. The setting you go to will depend on your condition, initial recovery, and the level of care you need. For example, if you received care in the hospital, you may go directly to an inpatient rehab facility or home health care setting. Or you may be discharged to an outpatient clinic.

Physical therapy can occur in a variety of settings. These include:

- Skilled nursing facilities.
- Workplace, if we have a contract with your company.

It is important to reduce disruptions to your treatment during any change in setting.

Your physical therapist also may determine that you might benefit from seeing another specialist or health care provider. They may recommend doing so in addition to having physical therapy or before starting physical therapy treatment.

Some physical therapists also provide annual visits to promote health and wellness. They may ask you to return for a follow-up or yearly visit.

You can contact us directly for an evaluation at 920-648-2400.