

## **Q&A: Do you take X-Rays?**

**By John Hartenberger, PT, CMTPT**

**Orthopedic & Spine Therapy Menasha and Oshkosh**

Although physical therapists cannot take or order X-rays, we do value them and occasionally request a physician to order x-rays.

The value of X-rays is important to physical therapists. First of all, X-rays help us with knowledge of the bone and joint anatomy. Usually, by the time a patient sees a physical therapist, X-rays have already been taken and a radiological report of that X-ray is very beneficial for our understanding and provides an opportunity to explain to the patient any bone or joint issues. It can also help the physical therapist focus treatment on a certain area.

On the other hand, as for physical therapy, X-rays do have a limited scope, since much of what physical therapists do is motion and movement orientated.

A good manual, physical exam (hands on approach) can really determine movement restrictions. Two key factors in a patient's condition, pain and strength, cannot be determined by an X-ray. Only a comprehensive physical and subjective exam give physical therapists the best direction regarding the pain source.

To summarize, X-rays are very important regarding anatomy of bone and joint conditions. But are limited to movement, strength and pain.