

## **Q&A – What is a physical therapist?**

### **Ask the Physical Therapist**

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#### **Q: What do physical therapists do?**

A: Many people think of physical therapy and think exercise. In many cases this is largely incorrect. While you will be prescribed a few condition-specific exercises, physical therapists also utilize a wide variety of manual or hands-on techniques to address your pain and improve mobility.

Physical therapists treat non-surgical and surgical impairments of many of the body's systems. Conditions include acute and chronic muscle and joint dysfunction of the upper and lower extremities, back and neck pain, headaches, pelvic dysfunction, etc. Treatment for these conditions is likely to occur 1-2 times per week over several weeks with the ultimate goal being that the patient reaches a point where they no longer require treatment of any kind.

#### **Q: What is the education of a physical therapist?**

- The education requirements for a physical therapist have evolved rapidly over the past 40 years
- Many physical therapists now attain a clinical doctorate (DPT), which requires 3 additional years of post-graduate work.
- Therapists can also perform further level of education including fellowships and certifications to continue to improve their clinical abilities
- Physical therapists have extensive training in evaluating, diagnosing, and treating patients

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