Physical Therapy in Merced & Atwater FAQs

Physical Therapy in Merced & Atwater

Is Physical Therapy for Me? Why are People referred to Physical Therapy in Merced & Atwater?

Physical Therapists are professionals who understand movement and function. Yosemite Physical Therapy in Merced & Atwater is skilled at assessing and managing a range of conditions including:

- Physical conditions such as back pain, arthritis and repetitive strain injury
- Sports injuries
- Paediatric conditions such as developmental delay, fractures and cardio respiratory conditions
- Post surgery recovery
- Physical complications of cancer and its treatment
- Incontinence
- Mobility problems related to neurological disorders such as stroke, spinal cord injury or Parkinson's disease
- Pre- and post-natal problems and other women's health conditions
- Neck and back pain and other joint injuries
- Respiratory and cardiac conditions
- Dizziness and vestibular dysfunction

(Ref: CPA, 2007.)

Yosemite Physical Therapy can also help you to prevent most of the above conditions by offering advice on posture, exercise and workplace and lifestyle habits.

Physical Therapists are highly skilled in treating movement and neuro-musculoskeletal disorders. Pain often accompanies a movement disorder, and Physical Therapists can help correct the disorder and relieve the pain.

What can I expect on my first visit?

During your first visit you can expect the following:

- Arrive at your appointment with your Physical Therapy prescription.
- A Physical Therapist at Yosemite Physical Therapy in Merced & Atwater will conduct your initial evaluation and discuss the following:

1. Your current condition and cause of the injury.
2. Your past medical history including medications, tests, and procedures related to your health and current problem.
3. The intensity of your pain – for example, when and what aggravates the pain and what you currently do to ease the pain.
4. How your condition/pain is impacting your daily activities. What are your functional limitations?
5. What you hope to achieve from Physical Therapy i.e.: setting your individual goals.

You will be evaluated by one of our licensed and highly trained Physical Therapists at Yosemite Physical Therapy. The therapist will perform an objective evaluation which may include some of the following:

1. Palpation - touching around the area of the pain/problem. This is done to check for tenderness, possible swelling, soft tissue integrity, tissue temperature, or deformity.
2. Range of Motion (ROM) - the therapist may move certain joints, to check for the quality of movement and to assess for any abnormalities of these joints as well as the ligaments, muscles, and tendons that surround them.
3. Active Movement and Strength - the therapist may check for strength and the quality of the muscle contraction. Pain and weakness may be noted. Often the muscle strength is graded.
4. Neurological Screening - the therapist may check to see how the nerves are communicating with the muscles, sensing touch, pain, vibration, or temperature. Reflexes may be assessed as well.
5. Special Tests - the therapist may perform special tests to confirm/rule out the presence of additional problems.
6. Posture Assessment - the positions of joints relative to ideal and each other may be assessed.

The Physical Therapist at Yosemite Physical Therapy will review your symptoms and objective findings from their examination and discuss the findings with you. Together you will plan your treatment. The therapist will continually evaluate the effect of treatment on your condition and adjust the treatment plan if necessary. Your plan will also help you manage your condition at home and educate you on how to prevent reoccurrence of problems.

What do I need to bring with me?

Bring your Physical Therapy prescription and a copy of your completed paperwork, as well as your insurance card, if applicable. In most cases, health insurance will cover your treatment. For Workers' Compensation, bring your claim number and your case manager's contact information. If you are covered by auto insurance or an attorney lien, make sure you bring this information.

How should I dress?

You should wear loose fitting clothing so that your Yosemite Physical Therapy *physiotherap%ists can easily move your joints and entire body as that helps us perform a thorough examination. You should be able to expose the area that we will be evaluating and treating. For example, if you have a knee problem, it is best to wear shorts. For a shoulder problem, a sleeveless tank top is a good choice. For low back problems, wear loose fitting shirt and shorts.

How long will each treatment last?

Plan for a minimum of half an hour, and a maximum of one hour. This depends on whether your appointment is an assessment or treatment.

How many visits will I need?

This is highly variable and depends on several factors including your type of injury, your personal medical history, and how well your condition responds to the treatment. You may need only one visit or you may require several visits and many months of care. Your Physical Therapist at Yosemite Physical Therapy will discuss with you how many visits you may require. Your progress will be re-evaluated on an ongoing basis and will assist your Physical Therapist in adjusting your frequency of treatment as needed.

Are there Physical Therapy professionals in Merced & Atwater?

The baseline education of all Physical Therapists at Yosemite Physical Therapy includes post-secondary training in a broad range of disciplines which enables them to assess and treat a variety of injuries and problems. While there are no formal Physical Therapy "specialists" many Physical Therapists go on to focus their practice in one particular area by undertaking extra training, and by developing knowledge and skills through treatment of a large volume of patients within an area of interest.

Some of the common practice areas are listed below. Ask your Physical Therapist inMerced & Atwater if you are interested to know about any advanced training or skills they have acquired.

Orthopaedic Physical Therapy - Probably the most common Physical Therapy practice area is orthopaedics. These practitioners are skilled in post-surgical care, fracture rehabilitation, muscle sprain and strain injuries, neck and back pain, hip and knee problems, shoulder, elbow, and wrist conditions, as well as arthritis, tendinitis injuries, and a wide variety of other orthopaedic problems. Some therapists even go on to further focus within orthopaedics to one particular body part or injury, for example, neck pain resulting from whiplash.

Manual Therapy - Manual therapy is a broad term that describes a variety of hands-on treatment techniques. Mobilizations, manipulations, neural mobilizations, joint mobilizations, craniosacral therapy, strain/counter strain, and myofascial release are examples of some commonly used manual therapy techniques. Most Physical Therapists dealing with orthopaedic conditions incorporate some form of manual therapy as a part of their treatment plan.

Geriatric Physical Therapy- Some therapists focus particularly on rehabilitation for seniors. As the body ages, a variety of age-specific challenges arise. The body stiffens, loses strength, balance declines, bones may become brittle (osteopenia) and easily break (osteoporosis,) endurance decreases, and it takes longer to recover from injuries. Balance and fall prevention are of paramount importance to the therapist who is working with seniors and for this reason, some clinics are dedicated solely to caring for those with balance problems. Although most Physical Therapists work with some senior/geriatric patients, geriatric Physical Therapists deal solely with the aged population and are therefore especially skilled in dealing with the age-related changes that occur.

Sports Rehabilitation – Sports Physical Therapists are focussed on assisting with recovery after injury or surgery related to a sporting activity. They have extra training and knowledge of the unique injuries that sporting activity can create, whether at a recreational or Olympic level. Each sport tends to generate a common set of injuries and sports. Physical Therapists are knowledgeable in dealing with these specific injuries as well as the many other non-specific injuries that occur due to sport participation. Sport-specific programs, such as throwing, running or swimming tend to be incorporated into the rehabilitation used by these therapists with the goal of getting the patient back to the specified sport as soon as safely possible. Many sport Physical Therapists will also use manual therapy techniques (see above) as part of their rehabilitation programs.

Fitness and Wellness – All Physical Therapists at Yosemite Physical Therapy have been trained with a baseline knowledge in fitness and wellness. Some Physical Therapists, however, focus their practice solely on creating or teaching individual or group programs for fitness or to prevent or deal with a wide variety of other health related areas. Issues such as osteoporosis, diabetes, weight loss, cardiac problems, and fall prevention are examples of these focus areas.

Hand Therapy – All *physiotherap%ists at Yosemite Physical Therapy have baseline training and knowledge in the rehabilitation of the hand after injury. The hand, however, due to its complex anatomy, functional ability and importance for normal daily function, has become an entire practice area on its own. Hand therapists tend to work very closely with plastic surgeons that specialize in hand operations, and also work very closely with occupational therapists to ensure that the function of the hand post surgery or injury is maximized.

Women's Health – These Physical Therapists focus their practice in women's issues such as pregnancy problems, pelvic pain, and incontinence. When compared to men, women have both a unique body structure as well as specific gender-related health issues that can arise. Physical Therapists who work primarily in women's health all have advanced knowledge and training regarding these problems and issues.

Industrial Rehabilitation – Physical Therapists in industrial rehabilitation deal specifically with patients that have suffered on-the-job injuries. They acquire extra training in such things as evaluating work tasks and ergonomics, fabricating assistive devices, and helping to redesign work flow/tasks to decrease the incidence of injury. Often industrial rehabilitation Physical Therapists will evaluate the ability to perform specific job tasks by performing a Functional Capacity Evaluation (FCE) and will then use this information to modify job tasks in order to maximize rehabilitation.

Paediatric Physical Therapy – Paediatric therapists focus their practice in the rehabilitation of children. In comparison to adults, children present with unique issues in regards to their bodies, and health. These specific paediatric issues need to be taken into account when treating and caring for this population; therefore the training and knowledge of a paediatric Physical Therapist is crucial. These Physical Therapists deal with children who suffer from a wide variety of problems such as cerebral palsy, developmental disorders, neurological disorders, and/or orthopaedic issues.

Aquatic Physical Therapy – Aquatic therapists take advantage of the physical properties of water to assist with the rehabilitative process. Buoyancy, turbulence, hydrostatic pressure, and the thermal properties of water can assist in the rehabilitation of a patient. Those suffering from chronic pain, osteoarthritis, fibromyalgia, rheumatoid arthritis, lumbar fusion surgery, or with a limited weight-bearing status are just a few of the many different patient populations that can benefit from aquatic therapy.

Cardiac and Pulmonary Rehabilitation

Neurological Rehabilitation – A large portion of Physical Therapists work with patients who suffer from neurological conditions such as brain injury, spinal cord injuries, strokes, and other neurological diseases. The rehabilitation for these patients is highly specialized and includes functional training or retraining of their limbs in order to accomplish tasks such as moving around in bed (bed mobility,) getting in and out of a bed or chairs (transfer training,) walking, and wheelchair use if needed.

Dizziness and Vertigo Rehabilitation – Some Physical Therapists and entire clinics devote their practice to the rehabilitation of patients who suffer from dizziness or BPPV (benign paroxysmal positional vertigo). These therapists are highly skilled in managing these unique issues and the associated problems that arise. The therapists are highly trained to use special techniques that affect sensory and balance centers of the brain and limbs in their rehabilitation.

Amputee Rehabilitation – These Physical Therapists focus their practice in the rehabilitation of amputees. Their special knowledge and expertise includes caring for the injured limb, training for the use of assistive devices (crutches, canes, prosthetic limbs, etc.), as well as functional activity and walking training.

Wound Care – Some Physical Therapists have further training in the treatment and care of wounds. This is another very focussed practice area and requires advanced knowledge in the removal of unviable tissue (debridement), the application of special dressings and prescription drugs/ointments, and the use of ultrasound, electrical stimulation, and aquatic modalities to promote healing.

Lymphedema Rehabilitation – These Physical Therapists have trained specifically in the treatment of the lymphatic system. This system is a special component of the circulatory system that helps filter and drain fluid from our arms and legs. When this drainage system is damaged, painful and detrimental swelling can result which is called lymphedema. Common causes of lymphedema are cancer treatments, specific diseases, surgery or immobility. Special positioning, massage and bandaging techniques are utilized by the lymphedema Physical Therapists to both avoid the onset of lymphedema in high risk situations as well as treat it if it occurs.

Osteoporosis Rehabilitation and Prevention – Some Physical Therapists as well as entire clinics focus their practice in the evaluation and treatment of patients with osteoporosis (low bone mass leading to bone fragility and increased fractures.) These therapists work closely with medical doctors to educate their patients about this disease, and design very specific weight-bearing and resistance training programs to combat it.
No further corrections were required below.

Is Physical Therapy painful?

Usually one of the primary objectives of Physical Therapy treatment is pain relief and most patients feel better after treatment. However, in some cases, Physical Therapy techniques can cause pain. For example, it may be painful recovering knee range of motion after total knee replacement or shoulder range of motion after shoulder surgery.
Other techniques such as deep massage can sometimes feel painful and even repetitive prescribed exercises may cause some pain to a recovering body part. Some patients feel sore immediately after a treatment but then feel great relief by that evening or next day. NO PAIN CAUSED EITHER DURING TREATMENT OR THAT YOU FEEL AFTER TREATMENT SHOULD BE UNBEARABLE OR EXCEED YOUR COMFORT LIMITS.

Since each patient has a different pain tolerance, if you do experience pain it is of utmost importance that you communicate the intensity, frequency, and duration of pain frequently to your Yosemite Physical Therapy Physical Therapist both during your treatment and on subsequent visits. Without this information, it is difficult for the Physical Therapist to adjust the treatment techniques and treatment plan to provide the individual care that each patient requires.

What happens if my problem or pain returns?

'Flare ups' (exacerbations) of managed pain or a recurrence of a problem can occur for a variety of reasons. If this happens you should either call or return to see your Physical Therapist at Yosemite Physical Therapy. You may need to return to Physical Therapy for further assessment or treatment, may need to see your doctor, or may simply need to modify your daily activities or exercise routine until the flare up subsides or the problem resolves.

Can I go to any Physical Therapy clinic?

In most cases, you have the right to choose any Physical Therapy clinic. The best thing to do is give us a call and we can answer any questions you might have.

What will I have to do after Physical Therapy?

Your Physical Therapist in Merced & Atwater will be very specific regarding what you need to do independently once you have stopped your Physical Therapy sessions. Some patients will need to continue with home exercises to manage their injury or avoid a recurrence. Some may be asked to return for a follow-up several months later. Others will complete their rehabilitation and return to normal daily activities without an ongoing home-program or need for further follow-up. It is important that you ask your Physical Therapist specifically about what you should do once you are no longer attending regular Physical Therapy treatments, and that you clearly communicate your goals to your therapist, so he/she can develop a custom home program tailored just for you.

What should I look for in a Physical Therapist or a Physical Therapy clinic?

These are some things you may consider when looking for a Physical Therapist or a Physical Therapy clinic:

- The Physical Therapist should be licensed in the state or province.
- The first visit should include a thorough medical history and physical examination before any treatment is rendered.
- The patient goals should be discussed in detail during the first visit.
- The Physical Therapist should be open and willing to discuss any questions you have about your problem on an ongoing basis.
- Care should generally include a variety of techniques which might include hands-on techniques, soft tissue work, and therapeutic exercises and in some cases heat, cold, electrical stimulation or ultrasound.
- The Physical Therapist should provide the majority of treatment. Physical Therapy aides or other types of therapists, if present, should be used as assistants in relation to the main treatment provided.
- Does the clinic have any Physical Therapists with special training or experience that can address your unique problem area? (e.g. vestibular rehab, urinary incontinence, post-stroke)

What are the hours of operation?

Can you briefly interview the therapist before the first visit?

How will their billing structure work in regards to your individual case? For example, what is there billing structure in regards to privately paid services, insurance claims, Worker's Compensation claims, or other government funded services?

As is often the case in life, word of mouth is the best referral, so ask your family and friends who or which clinic they would recommend. Lastly, if you are not happy with the service you are being provided, take control of your own health, and make a change. There a thousands of excellent, highly qualified, knowledgeable Physical Therapists helping patients everyday; find one that is the right fit for you!

Yosemite Physical Therapy provides services for Physical Therapy in Merced & Atwater.