



## Brain Injury Related Services

# PHYSICAL THERAPY



WHO

**Physical therapists (PTs)** evaluate, diagnose, and treat physical disorders. They help restore and maintain physical function and decrease/manage pain through therapeutic exercise.

### ■ Physical Therapist (PT)

- Education/Requirements: Receive a Doctorate in Physical Therapy (DPT) degree from an accredited school and pass a state licensure exam.

### ■ Physical Therapist Assistant (PTA)

- Education/Requirements: Receive an associate's degree from an accredited PTA program and be certified and/or pass state licensure exam.

WHAT

### PTs assess

- Functional movement/availability
- Pain and discomfort
- Physical strength and condition
- Dizziness/balance disorders
- Minor oculomotor (vision-body coordination) changes
- Neurological changes
- Exercise tolerance/progression

### Outcomes of PT

Increase flexibility and range of motion

Improve strength, balance, and coordination

Learn to use assistive devices

WHEN

### PTs are present in all stages of recovery

#### ■ Early stage (coma)

- Soft tissue mobilization and range of motion exercises to maintain joint integrity
- Mobility to prevent contractures
- Strategies for positioning to maintain soft tissue length

#### ■ Middle and end stage

- To strengthen and maintain muscles
- Relieve pain
- Functional return to activity and sports

Brain injury can cause neuromuscular, cognitive, visual, perceptual, and behavioral impairments that can lead to functional limitations or disability.

Common functional limitations PTs can help with include:

- Limited mobility
- Muscle weakness
- Balance and vestibular problems
- Chronic pain

Working with a PTs begins with evaluating and testing to identify the patient's needs. Once the patient's needs are determined, a plan for treatment can be made.

- Evaluate and plan treatment, discuss its purpose and expected outcome
- Increase flexibility and range of motion
- Exercise to improve strength, balance, and coordination
- Use treatment modalities such as electrical stimulation, ultrasound, soft tissue, myofascial release, and craniosacral therapy
- Teach patients to use assistive devices like crutches or prostheses



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