

Peaking Interests

The quarterly newsletter
of Apex Physical Therapy

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Physical therapy: *A hands-on profession*

Addressing the question: "What do physical therapists do?"

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Something I've come to notice while working as a physical therapist today is that a substantial degree of confusion exists within the general population when it comes to the question of what those in my profession actually do. Most likely, this uncertainty extends from the number of individuals who perform jobs similar, but not akin to that of physical therapists.

Thus, with October marking the onset of National Physical Therapy Month, we at Apex wanted to take the opportunity to clarify just what it is physical therapists actually do.

Most commonly, physical therapists are confused with either chiropractors, massage therapists or per-

sonal trainers. Understandable, as these professions share many similarities. Chiropractors and massage therapists, like physical therapists, work to relieve pain and restore proper joint or muscle function to help individuals recover from injury or combat disease. Personal trainers, like physical therapists, focus on muscle strengthening.

In order to understand the differences between these professions, however, one must look closely at the types of procedures they carry out. These can be broken down generally into two groups: manual therapy and exercise.

Manual therapy – also known as manipulative therapy, hands-on therapy and, at times, massage – is the primary means through which physical therapists, chiropractors and massage therapists achieve their professional goal. Manual therapy techniques have a number of benefits. They increase circulation to soft tissue, joints and vital organs, which allows nutrients in and pushes toxins out. And they can also decrease pain by relaxing the muscles and

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Now serving
Five locations

Royersford

341 10th Avenue
Suite 101
Royersford, PA 19468
610-792-8100

Blue Bell

676 DeKalb Pike
Suites 105-106
Blue Bell, PA 19422
610-270-0300

Chalfont

1500 Horizon Drive
Suite 102E
Chalfont, PA 18914
215-712-0300

Pottstown-Coventry

10 Glocker Way
Pottstown, PA 19465
610-323-4300

Lafayette Hill

466 Germantown Pike
Suite 200
Lafayette Hill, PA 19444
610-832-7510

Hours of operation

Mon-Thurs: 8 a.m. - 8 p.m.
Fri: 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Sat: 8 a.m. - 12 p.m.

Check out our Web site

www.apex-pt.com



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A PT's role: merging manual therapy and exercise

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increasing joint flexibility.

Chiropractors are advanced-degree, licensed professionals who diagnose and treat patients with neurologic and musculoskeletal concerns, such as headaches or neck/back pain. The manual therapy technique they use most commonly is called thrust manipulation therapy. It consists of high-velocity, low-amplitude movements – which are often accompanied by audible pops and cracks – that realign the joints.

Massage therapists are licensed professionals who work to reduce pain, tension and spasms; increase blood circulation and provide relaxation. The manual therapy techniques they apply focus on the body's soft tissue – that is, the muscles, ligaments, tendons and fascia (connective tissue surrounding the muscles, nerves and joints). Often, chiropractic offices will employ massage therapists because their techniques are so complimentary.

Personal trainers are optionally certified professionals who help their clients achieve total body fitness through cardiovascular and strength-based exercise programs. As a technique, exercise likely requires less explanation than manual therapy. It is, however, important to recognize that the exercise regime devised by a personal trainer is more generalized and less functional than that created by a physical therapist.

To put it simply, physical therapy is like a combination of all three of the aforementioned professions. PTs are licensed in their field. However, they are also required to first complete four years of undergraduate schooling and two to three more years of education in a post-graduate program. This allows them to examine and diagnose patients with neurologic and musculoskeletal problems or other medical conditions limiting their ability to move and perform daily functional activities.

PTs address these diagnoses with treatment plans that generally utilize both manual therapy techniques, as well as functional exercise – that is, exercise based on diagnostic testing that is deemed safe and necessary to improving the patient's level of function. In addition, physical therapists also employ modalities, such as hot or cold pack application, ultrasound and electrical stimulation. These therapeutic modalities serve to improve circulation, increase enzymatic activity in soft tissue, develop sensory and motor awareness, and control inflammation and pain.

The profession of physical therapy has evolved considerably since its inception. Originally, physical therapists focused mainly on exercise and modalities. However, in the 1970s, PTs of the time realized that they needed to expand their strategies in order to thoroughly address their patients' dysfunctions.

Stanley Paris was the first therapist to discover the benefits of manual therapy. In fact, his discovery occurred when he accidentally manipulated a patient. When he realized that his accident provided the patient with considerable relief, he began refining his technique.

To this day, the physical therapy profession continues to progress. For instance, many physical therapists today note a rising push toward the necessity of a doctorate degree in their field. In addition, new techniques are continually being discovered. And physical therapy as a whole continues to gain credibility as a legitimate health care profession.

By now, your head is probably swimming with terminology. But hopefully, we have at least begun to clarify what our profession entails. As Stanley Paris put it at a lecture in 2006, "In this age of high-tech and low-touch health care, we in physical therapy, especially manual physical therapy, have something rather special to offer."

Meet our Apex Staff



Beverly Kester

Billing and Collections Manager

Beverly was hired as Apex Physical Therapy's first employee in September of 2002.

Before joining Apex's team, she worked for 25 years as a claims adjuster for the Travelers and John Hancock Insurance companies. Her resultingly vast knowledge of the insurance industry has made her a

huge asset to Apex's Billing and Collections team.

Beverly spends the majority of her day on the phone with the various insurance companies, ensuring our patients get the most out of their coverage.

She loves working with people and thus, her co-workers and the patients with whom she's able to converse are ultimately her favorite part of the job.

"I hope I am a small part of their recovery," she says, "even if it is behind the scenes."

When she isn't at work, Beverly loves spending time with her family. She describes her two grandchildren, Rachel, 10, and Jimmy, 7, as the lights of her life.

She's also active in her church and enjoys reading, TV mysteries and computer games.



Apex Physical Therapy was recently notified that, as a result of a 2006 reader's choice poll conducted by the Times Herald in Norristown, our clinics have been voted number one in Montgomery County.

The poll gives readers the opportunity to pick the best businesses and services in the area.

For this reason, we would like to extend our sincere gratitude to all our patients who participated in this survey. We look forward and promise to continue providing you with quality care long into the future.

Welcome to our new staff members

Apex would like to recognize and extend a warm welcome to some of our newest staff members. They include:

- Christina Lipsky, physical therapist in Chalfont
- Liola Gerhard, corporate administrative assistant
- Maureen Boccella, receptionist in Chalfont
- Mary Goldblum, receptionist in Lafayette Hill
- Teresa Naughton, receptionist in Lafayette Hill

Another tiny miracle

Apex is pleased to announce that Blue Bell managing director Brian Warenius and his wife, Karen, brought their third child, Sara Kate, into the world on July 30. Sara weighed 6 lbs., 4 oz. and was 19 inches long. All members of the Warenius family are doing well.

Staff achievements

Chalfont managing director Marsha Berger Grant took part in Jefferson Hospital's Philadelphia Distance Run on Sept. 17. She finished the 13.1 mile half-marathon in 2 hours, 27 minutes, 24 seconds, surpassing her goal of 2 hours, 30 minutes. Congratulations Marsha!

Senior Jubilee

Apex Physical Therapy will be participating again in the TriCounty Area Chamber of Commerce's Senior Jubilee this year. This event allows seniors in the community to gather information on government, business and health care from more than 75 exhibitors. The jubilee will be held at Pottsgrove Middle School, 1351 N. Hanover St., Pottstown, on Tuesday, Oct. 3 from 8 a.m to 1 p.m. We look forward to seeing you there!

Treat_(ment) for your Tummy



Oatmeal Raisin Cookies

This is another favorite amongst family members of one of Apex's owners. While these cookies are good at any time of year, there's just something about them that's extra tasty when the first leaves start to fall in autumn. And if the recipe looks familiar, it's because it used to be frequently featured on the back of Quaker Oatmeal tubs.

Ingredients

- 1 cup (2 sticks) softened butter
- 1 cup firmly packed brown sugar
- 1/2 cup granulated sugar
- 2 eggs
- 1 tsp vanilla
- 1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour

- 1 tsp baking soda
- 1 tsp cinnamon
- 1/2 tsp salt (optional)
- 3 cups uncooked Quaker Oats
- 1 cup raisins
- 1 cup walnuts (optional)

Prep/cook time: 1 hour, 30 min
Servings: 4 dozen cookies

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
3. Beat together butter, and brown and granulated sugar until creamy.
4. Add eggs, flour and vanilla. Beat mixture well.
5. Add combined flour, baking soda, cinnamon and salt. Mix well.
6. Stir in oats, raisins and walnuts.
7. Drop rounded tablespoonfuls onto an ungreased cookie sheet.
8. Bake 10 to 12 minutes or until cookies turn golden brown.
9. Once out of oven, leave on cookie sheet for one minute, then remove cookies to wire rack to cool.
10. Enjoy with a big glass of milk or vanilla ice cream.

Do it Right: Back to School Backpack Safety

When it comes to their child's health, most parents are probably more concerned with making sure there's a well-balanced lunch in their child's backpack than making sure they're wearing it properly.

However, according to the American Physical Therapy Association, a misworn or overloaded backpack can pose a number of threats to your child's physical wellness. Most frequently, problems occur when a child uses faulty postures, such as arching the back, bending forward or leaning to one side, in order to compensate for a backpack that is too heavy.

These postural adaptations can cause improper spinal alignment. They also put strain and fatigue on the muscles and soft tissues, which leaves the neck, shoulders and back more vulnerable to injury.

"Back pain is already the most common ailment among working American adults," Mary Wilmarth, a physical therapist who conducted a study of backpack use among school children, said. "If we don't correct the backpack issues that are causing children back pain, the issue will become magnified in years to come."

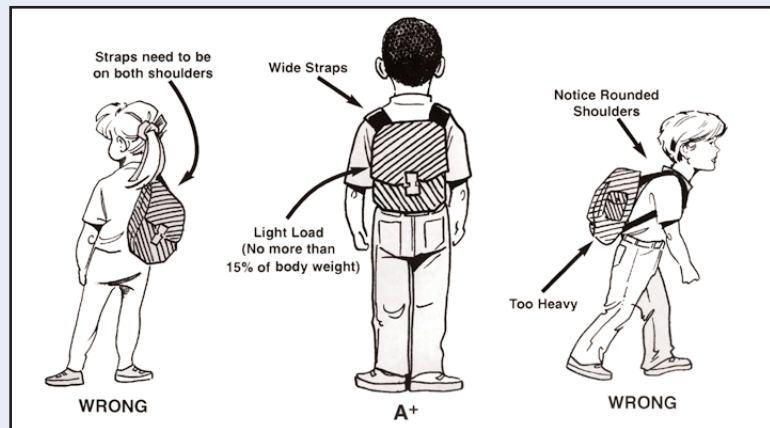


Illustration courtesy of the American Physical Therapy Association

Tips for Safe Backpack Use

- Wear both straps to better distribute weight and promote well-aligned, symmetrical posture.
- Remove and put on backpacks carefully. Keep the trunk stable and avoid excessive twisting.
- Wear the pack over the strongest mid-back muscles
- Lighten the load to no more than 15 percent of the child's body weight.
- Place the heaviest items closest to the back.
- When purchasing a new backpack, look for one with the following:
 - a padded back - to reduce pressure on the back, shoulders and underarm regions
 - hip and chest belts - to transfer weight from the back and shoulders to the hips and torso
 - multiple compartments - to better distribute the weight of the backpack and ease access

Achieving the Apex

What patients are saying about their successes with our clinics



Photo courtesy of Let's Offroad Mountain Biking Adventures

"I came to Apex with chronic back pain. I have been to several facilities and have never had such a thorough job done on my back or such a great experience as I had at Apex. My therapist worked very hard with me over the course of several weeks and this is the first time I have walked out PAIN FREE! I will always return to Apex if I need additional therapy. Your staff is the best."

– Mildred M.

"I had ankle surgery in March 2006 and began my physical rehabilitation in May. When I first arrived at Apex, I could barely move my ankle more than a few degrees. After three months of intensive therapy and work carried out by my therapists, I am nearly 100 percent. I can already run and soon will begin athletic activities. The entire staff at Apex were eager to help me improve and made my therapy enjoyable."

– Hani A.

"Every one of my friends told me that physical therapy would not help my torn rotator cuff, but I went to therapy anyway and boy, am I glad I did. The results were nothing less than a miracle. My shoulder is 100 percent improved and I feel like I am in better shape than ever. I'd recommend Apex to any and everyone."

– Victor K.



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