

Definition

Physical therapy is widely known for treating and healing people who get injured in everyday life activities. According to Merriam-Webster, physical therapy is therapy for the “preservation, enhancement, or restoration of movement” that might have been “threatened by disability, injury, or disease” and will use “therapeutic exercise, physical modalities (massage), and assistive devices” to aid in the repair of what was injured (Merriam-Webster). There are many different branches of physical therapy that an injured person could possibly go through. There are nine common types of physical therapy exercise, ultra sound, traction, electrical stimulation and TENS, light therapy, joint mobilization, massage, heat and/or ice and hydrotherapy (Therapeutic Health Organization). There are about four types of physical therapy that are used the most for patients they are: joint mobilization, exercise, heat and/or ice, and hydrotherapy.

Joint mobilization is one of the most common categories under physical therapy. Joint mobilization “involves a physical therapist applying passive pressure” to the injured patient’s specific joint. As the therapist employs passive pressure on the wounded joint it’s assisting the range of motion and mobility in the joint. A lot of joints are hinge-like when in motion; however, some also have the capability of gliding. The therapist will put pressure on the specific joint to aid in the restoration of the gliding motion (Therapeutic Health Organization).

Exercise is the most common and “non-invasive method” that therapists use for treatment. With exercise, a patient’s strength, flexibility, and range of motion will all improve. Although physical therapy is usually passive, exercise therapy can either be passive or active. Active therapy can vary, as long as the patient is using their own power to do each exercise, then

they are performing active therapy to their injury. Passive therapy is the exact opposite meaning that the therapist does all the work when applying pressure to the injured area. When a patient has a terrible accident or is going to therapy for a recent surgery they had, passive therapy would be the most common technique used to rehabilitate the patient. After surgery, most patients are very immobile so utilizing passive therapy is actually the only means of therapy that will initiate the patient's recovery (Therapeutic Health Organization).

After an appointment of physical therapy, a great form of therapy that helps the recovery process move along quicker is either icing or heating the injured area and also on a daily basis to keep it from swelling. Icing the injured area on a daily basis assists in the reduction of pain and swelling up to a certain extent. Ice is an easy way to improve and restore the circulation of blood throughout the injured area. Although ice works well with injuries, heat can be much more effective and efficient to certain patients. Heat therapy, also known as "superficial heating," is used for "reducing pain, increasing tissue elasticity and promoting healing of injured tissue." To help relieve joint pain and swelling in the injured zone, heat can be applied by a method called "hydrocollator pack" which is moist heat (Heat Therapy).

The final method a physical therapy that is most commonly used is hydrotherapy. Hydrotherapy is when the patient gets into a whirlpool or therapy pool that is heated at an exceptionally high temperature so that the swelling will reduce, circulation will improve, wounds can sooth, and muscles can relax a lot easier. When using hydrotherapy to regain movement and muscle strength it is a lot easier to do so because there is no pressure or weight being put on the injured joints to keep them from moving. Being in a pool to regain motion works for older people and people who can't do much on land on their own. Many find hydrotherapy easier and

more effective because there's not much gravity holding them back from moving their joints in certain directions (Johnson).

Physical therapy may have many different branches connected to it; however, they all have the same goal, which is to regain strength, mobility, and range of movement in the specified injured area of the patient. There are nine methods that could be classified under physical therapy, but only about four work the best. The four most effective types of physical therapy are joint mobility, exercise, heat and/or ice therapy, and hydrotherapy. Physical therapy will forever be a necessity in the world because as long as people are participating in sports or even certain jobs, injuries are going to happen and the only way to heal correctly and quickly is to go through physical therapy.

Works Cited

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