



Everything You Need to Know about
PHYSICAL THERAPY

THE 40 MOST FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

-Helpful Information for Anyone in Pain or
Recovering From Injury



C. Clarke Tanner PT, MPT, COMT, ATC, CSCS, FMSC, TPI

About the Author

C. Clarke Tanner PT, MPT, COMT, ATC, CSCS, FMSC, TPI

Clarke Tanner, a practicing physical therapist and founder of Thrive Physical Therapy, Inc., was elected by Virginia Living Magazine as the Top Physical Therapy Practice in Central Virginia from 2014- 2017 and by Expertise Richmond. He is a certified clinical specialist in Spine Care and Orthopedics, with distinction, through the North American Institute of Orthopedic Manual Therapy and holds a variety of other specialty designations. Having practiced for greater than seventeen years, he has successfully helped thousands of patients with spine-related disorders. In the past, Clarke has worked through his own back injury and is familiar with the process of working back to full health. The experience helped his understanding and ability to more effectively assist his patients. He is passionate about physical therapy and enjoys working with his team to help his patients/clients return to the activities they enjoy and to thrive in life!

Introduction

In this Special Report written to help enlighten you on the benefits of Physical Therapy (PT), we share with you 40 of the most common questions, provide answers, offer clarity, and debunk myths (and the skepticism) that many people have and hold concerning the PT profession. This Special Report is designed for health conscious men and women aged 35-64+, serious about their health and who are determined enough to do something about it. The report is compiled from taking concerning questions from our patients/clients, message board, inquisitive email replies. They come from men and women who value their health enough to proactively make a **simple inquiry** about what they can do to improve it. And are curious how Physical Therapy can help them achieve their goal of returning to great health. The questions, and answers that follow, are in no particular order. It is our hope that they will help you to better understand PT and how it may be help in improving your health and to assist in getting you back to the activities you love and thriving in life!

Q1 What is Physical Therapy (PT)?

Physical Therapy is a proven strategy for first easing the worries and concerns of people suffering from aches, pain, and stiffness. Then helping them move more efficiently/easier, with less pain, and back to living an active and healthy lifestyle in their 40's, 50's or 60's.

More, it lets that person live free from the worry that the same problem will come back and cause them to be unable to continue the activities they enjoy in the future.

Here is the American Physical Therapy Associations description. Physical Therapy is a dynamic profession with an established theoretical and scientific base to restore, maintain, and promote not only optimal physical function but optimal wellness and fitness and optimal quality of life as it relates to movement and health, Prevent the onset, symptoms, and progression of impairments, functional limitations, and disabilities that may result from diseases, disorders, conditions, or injuries.

Q2. How long before I feel the difference from Physical Therapy?

There are two ways PT can help and a good Physical Therapist will lift your concerns and ease your worries by educating you on what's wrong, often within 20-30 minutes. The process of taking the first step to know and understand your issues starts the healing process.

Next, the speed at which the physical problem improves is completely dependent upon what is dysfunctional, your age, how long you've had it, how severe it is, what needs to be corrected, the environment in which you work, what needs to be changed in your body to make a difference, etc. The analogy we talk about in physical therapy is putting the individual's puzzle pieces together. Some people have more complex needs and require more pieces to be put together before they feel a significant change in their symptoms, while others respond quickly. The key, really, is determining what your puzzle pieces are and addressing them effectively. Rarely does anyone spend more than 2-3 weeks in our care before leaving happy.

Q3. Do I get personal support if I need it?

Yes. If you arrange to try PT with us, you'll be given almost unrestricted access to your own Physical Therapist who will be on hand to take your call or reply to your emails, for as long as you need.

Q4. Does Physical Therapy help someone like me?

Here's a list of the types of people physical therapy helps:

- 1. People aged 35-70 and love to be active - Why?** Because men, women and couples "on-the-go" have lots of good reasons to get better fast.
- 2. People still working (and want to remain that way...) especially sales people, managers, engineers, office workers, teachers, manual workers, nurses, health care workers, lawyers, even doctors...Why?** Because they need to move easy and be able to sit comfortably for long periods in order to perform well in their jobs.
- 3. People aged 55+ and determined to remain independent - Why?** Because many people see the impact that physical ill health has impacted their parents.
- 4. Especially active and involved Grandparent - Why?** Grandparents who play games with their grand kids, help with school work or like to walk with them to and from school, take them places or baby sit them, often tell us that's why they felt the need to come and try PT to improve their physical health.
- 5. People who take their health very seriously - Why?** A lot of the people who work with us are very "pro-active" about their health. That means they read up on nutrition, health topics, try to eat right, take vitamins other supplements - and do their best to stay out of the GP's surgery and the hospital. Our patients/clients are motivated to stay out of the doctor's office, stay free of medications, and to avoid surgery which is "why" they come to see us.

Q5. What happens if I get there and I'm not happy with the experience at the end?

We will refund your payment in full with- NO questions asked.

Q6. What should I wear for Physical Therapy?

We will give you specifics on the phone. But you never have to remove large amounts of clothing. To make your experience as comfortable as possible please keep in mind the location of your injured body part. For example if you have a lower back injury, shorts and a T-shirt would be ideal. Or if you have a neck or shoulder injury a T-shirt or tank top will allow us to evaluate what you effectively.

Q7. What if I don't want to make another appointment after my first visit, do you take it personally?

Not at all! Our first priority is to tell you what's going wrong and then tell you what you need to do next by drawing you up a plan. Once we have done that, if you're happy, then we are happy and we will have given you steps for moving forward

Q8. How likely is it Physical Therapy will be helpful for me?

If your problem or concern is one of pain and or stiffness in the muscles or joints of the following area:

- Back • Neck/Shoulder
- Hip • Ankle
- Knee • Foot/Ankle

Then it's 99% likely that physical therapy will be able to help you. To give you an example

Q9. My doctor tells me I have Arthritis can Physical Therapy help me?

Yes we love to help people with Arthritis! Please understand we can't CURE it as there is no way to get rid of Arthritis. There is much that can be done to help get your body working more efficiently to help eliminate/manage your symptoms and to get you back to the activities that you enjoy. Many people come to us aged 45+ and suffering with "wear and tear" (arthritis) in their back, neck, hips, knees, etc. and they do spectacularly well!

Q10. Can I talk to a Physical Therapist before I schedule to confirm they are the right one for me?

Absolutely! Just call us using at 804 320-2220 or even email your question to me using Clarke@thriveptva.com

Q11. Will you do anything at the first session to help my pain?

Yes. It's always our intention to start making progress on the pain and or stiffness you have, as well as help ease your other concerns and frustrations.

Q12. Is Physical Therapy just for younger people who are injured and play sports?

Absolutely NOT! Physical Therapy helps people who do play sport but, PT is actually much more valuable and best suited to help people who are aged 50+ and who just want to keep active and on-the-go for as long as possible.

Q13. Is there a female/male therapist that I could see if I wanted?

Yes.

Q14. Will I get any exercises or anything like that to take home with me?

Only if it is appropriate and we think doing them is not going to make your pain worse. We will give you as many hints or tips as possible that you can be using when you leave to help improve your situation right away.

Q15. What will happen if I don't choose to go and see a Physical Therapist?

Your current predicament will likely continue, and you may run the risk of getting worse or developing chronic pain that can be much more difficult to address. Also studies have been shown that degenerative changes can be worse long term if musculoskeletal issues such as weakness, gait dysfunction, or improperly rehabbed injuries are not addressed. A key factor to consider is the sooner you decide to come in the quicker we can help to get you feeling better and back to the activities you enjoy!

Q16. How long will it take for Physical Therapist to get me active and healthy again?

It varies depending on what is happening with you and what you would like to get back to (see question 2). It is difficult give an average time frame as everyone's situation is different but, we have had great success at getting patients/clients back to the activities they love. Our goal is to improve your health and to get you back to activities you enjoy as quickly and safely as we can.

Q17. "This only happened the other day", and I'm in a lot of pain. How long should I wait before I come in and see a therapist for help?

ASAP. There will always be a number of things that we can do. Sometimes it's as simple as "Do this, but don't do that...". And the first will be to tell you what NOT to do. Many people make ill informed decisions when it comes to dealing with sudden pain. In general it is good to get in sooner rather than later as much can be done to help you feel better and prevent anything from getting worse.

Q18. I have been diagnosed with a Herniated disc, Spinal Stenosis, and Degenerative Disc Disease can you help me?

Yes absolutely! We help people with this sort of problem everyday and it is what we do best! We are happy to show you how.

Q19. Somebody mentioned a Chiropractor to me, what's the difference between Physiotherapy and a Chiropractor?

To be brief, a PT looks to identify the source of your problem and to address it long term. Our aim is to help you so that you will not need us long term. So a PT will work you out a plan, to work on stopping the injury happening again. We do similar techniques to osteopaths and chiropractors, such as manipulation of your spine, but we do addition hands on work and a thorough education including corrective exercise and how to move more efficiently. By providing a thorough education as well as getting your body working more efficiently, we will empower you with what you need to stay healthy long term and prevent the need for frequent recurring treatment and added expense.

Q20. I can't work this thing out. One minute I'm not bothered by it, then the next it can quite literally take my breath away. Just when I think it's getting better, it hits me again! What if I come in and see you and it doesn't hurt at that time, will I be wasting my time?

No. Pain is not really what we do! Physical therapy is about finding whatever it is that is causing pain to happen in the first place. And if your injury is now a few weeks old, two things are likely to be happening. The first is that the inflammatory process may be calming down, which can making pain less constant (which is good). Second, even though pain may be improving the underlying problems such as weakness, lack of mobility, stiff joints, and poor movement patterns that caused the original problem will still be present. Because of this it is no unusual to get intermittent catching/locking, feeling of vulnerability, and intermittent symptoms. The key is to figure the variable contributing to your problem and address them long term. Improving your overall musculoskeletal health, movement quality, and to address all the factors that may be adding to your issue from a global perspective is the key to long term success.

Q21. Is Physical Therapy guaranteed to help me?

No. And no decent physical therapist will ever claim such a thing is possible. It simply isn't for a variety of reasons. But that is why we offer a firm, money back guarantee, just in case you're one of the unlucky ones Physical Therapy can't help. If you are not happy with your experience and service we have provided, we always offer your money back in full (on cash pay services).

Q22. Does this sort of thing happen to other people like me?

We see many people with the same sorts of injuries, all day long. Particularly, the 35-64+ age group who suffer from aches, pains and stiffness.

Q23. What is the long term benefit of me choosing to go and see a Physical Therapist?

You have the freedom in your life to do what you want and when you want to do it, unrestricted by pain or stiffness while avoiding surgery or dependency on medications.

Q24. How quickly will I be seen?

It can sometimes take patience to get in to see us as our services are in high demand because of the results we are able to get. However most frequently we can get you in within a few days. If you need an emergency appointment, please let us know on the phone or in your email and we can arrange for a therapist to work with you as quickly as possible (frequently within 24-48 hours).

Q25. Do you use "hands" treatments?

Yes. The care that we provide is predominantly "hands-on". We believe (and proven by research) that "hands on techniques" soft tissue work, stretching and manipulation etc.. combined with a thorough education, are the fastest way to return you to enjoying better health.

Q26. I'm not in any pain per se - I'm just experiencing lots of stiffness and tightness and worried that something's about to go. Am I right to be considering physical therapy?

You are PERFECT for physical therapist (and us). Some people think that PT is about ending pain - that's only ONE thing we do. But it isn't the BEST. The aim is to stop you from ever

getting to the point where you're in lots of pain by making you more mobile, flexible, and your body stronger and able to withstand the amount of activity you want to do, no matter what your age.

Q27. What's the number 1 reason I should come in and see you as in, what's the best thing about seeing a Physical Therapist?

Getting the diagnosis. Finding out what's wrong and what might be contributing to your problem from a specific and global perspective. Once you know that, a plan to help you move forward can be devised.

Q28. What's the difference between a good therapist and bad one?

Just three things:

- The amount of "care" taken (easy to spot).
- The Hands on techniques and skills used in our treatment.
- Ability to accurately diagnose an injury/problem.
- The ability to effectively educate/coach you

Q29. I have had "clicking", "clunking" and "cracking" noises happening in my joints for a few years now. And the pain is just starting to get worse with it. I'm 48. Is Physical Therapy for me?

Yes. You're an almost perfect candidate. This is a typical story. Most joint problems begin with warning signs like the "clicks and cracks" you've been hearing. And then a few years later symptoms can arise (hopefully not!).

Q30. I'm in the early days of joint pain and stiffness. I've got to 50 without any problems but I'm now worried I'm next in line for joint troubles like the rest of my friends of a similar age. I'm really active and love to play squash, walk and swim. Can Physical Therapy help someone like me?

Yes. It's a simple case of strengthening your body to limit the impact of arthritis before it progresses. Physical Therapy will give you hope, the confidence to go places (and do things) and WILL let you get active again fast.

Q31. I'm a cyclist and I'm not in any pain with the outside of my knee when I rest, but it reoccurs whenever I get back on my bike. Is that common and do I need Physical Therapy?

Yes and Yes. Most sports injuries settle down so that you can walk around and do simple everyday things without pain. But as soon as you step it up a level or two, if the problem is still there, it lets you know in the way of tightness, pain or swelling and stiffness.

Q32. Will help me with my flexibility? I'm "stiff as a board" the few hours after I've been out on my bike and I know this is causing my achy lower back.

I am a cyclist myself and can definitely relate. Yes we will walk you through a simple exercise routine you can do every day to help eliminate this. Oh, and we'll fix your "achy back" too.

Q33. Is there anyone that Physical Therapy ISN'T right for?

Yes. Anyone who is expecting a miracle and hoping to be fixed in one visit. Rarely possible, particularly for injuries happening to men and women aged 40+. Or for someone who truly

believes that nothing will help or that is not willing to work to help themselves on a basic level.

Q34. Is Physical Therapy expensive?

Not in my humble opinion. It comes down to what you value, I guess. Most people will spend more each month on a fresh cup of coffee, than the “cost” of PT. And by the way - there is no set “price list”. And that’s because everything we offer is tailored to suit you, your needs and what you are hoping to achieve and even by which type of PT you’d prefer to see. Thus, the “cost” for the visit to a PT (and other services) at our office is based upon what you are wanting and hoping to achieve moving forward.

Q35. Have you got someone who specializes in ____X____?

(X is usually any one of these following areas:)

- Back pain • Knee pain
- Sports injuries • Massages
- Dry Needling
- Neck/Shoulder Pain • Foot/Ankle Injuries
- Muscle tension and tightness

And the answer: Yes. We have someone who specializes in each of those areas.

Q36. What does Physical Therapy treatment actually entail?

Things like soft tissue mobilization, joint/spine mobilization, stretching and loosening of joints and muscles, combined with exercises, training on how to move more efficiently, workstation setup, and advice to improve posture/ergonomics, teaching etc.....

Q37. Is Physical Therapy painful?

No! But it is true that PT is a physical experience and as such treatments can often be a little uncomfortable at times, but we will always aim to be as gentle as possible and cause the minimal discomfort we possibly can to get your problem solved as fast as we can. Before we do any PT techniques we will let you know what to expect.

Q38. Will I get some things (tips) that I can be doing at home to help myself get better quicker?

Absolutely from your first session going forward. The goal is to help you in every which way that we can. Primarily, we will do everything for you, but of course, you’re only with us for 30-60 minutes, so, we aim to “arm” you with tools, hints and tips that you can use to make a difference that you will feel, very quickly, on your own.

Q39. Can I pay on a payment plan for my treatment if I need a few visits?

Yes. We offer very easy payment plans that let you pay for any care plan over 2 or 3 months.

Q40. Why did my GP tell me NOT to try Physical Therapy and just rest?

Unfortunately some GP’s are NOT well trained to know injuries and the symptoms of physical pain well enough to understand who can benefit from Physical Therapy or what can be helped.

Bonus Section

Q41. How long does the session last?

Depends which option you want to take. We have a 30 minute option, and a very popular 60 minute. Reality is, it will take as long as you need to get the help you came looking for.

Q42. Will I be in any pain after the treatment i.e. the next day?

More often than not the pain stops as soon as we do, so you only have to tell us to stop and we will. Pain is a side to Physical Therapy that is often unavoidable and most patients eventually concede that the pain is a nice sort of pain, one they know that is doing them some good and is often no worse than the pain that they are already in. The discomfort usually reduces as treatment progresses and we always advise you on things like ice and heat to help reduce the soreness that might be caused by the treatment. If it's painful the next day, ice usually soothes it!

Q43. Do I need a referral from my GP?

No. Just give us a call and we will set up a time to take a look. If you're willing to invest in your health, you're very welcome to come see us.

Q44. How often will I need treatment?

That is always dependent upon the nature of your injury, what is going on with your body, and how aggressively you want to go after improvements. Our goal is to return you to full fitness as quickly and as safely as possible. Your therapist will be in a better position to answer this following your initial consultation. Big Tip: Getting in early nearly always means less time to recover and fewer sessions needed.

Q45. What should I consider regarding selecting the right Physical Therapist and the right location for me?

I am obviously biased here, but I think there is no better action you can take to be rid of back pain quickly than working with a skilled physical therapist. I have worked on countless people, with varying degrees of dysfunction, and seen them achieve miraculous improvement and return to the activities they love. Everyone should work with a physical therapist for prevention as well as treatment of unexpected injuries or conditions. Much like you have a dentist to prevent problems with your teeth, you need a physical therapist to prevent and heal injuries.

I would recommend a few guidelines in picking a location and therapist. Your therapist should have specialty training in hands-on, corrective care (manual therapy), as it has been shown to be more effective than traditional physical therapy care. Manual therapy is hands-on work to mobilize/manipulate stiff joints, increase muscle relaxation, connective tissue pliability, and or guide/facilitate proper movement or muscle activation with the ultimate goal of improving movement. Also, the therapist should provide some degree of one-on-one care, without heavy reliance on aids/technicians. Your sessions should not feel like a group exercise class or trip to the gym. Treatment should not center on passive modalities

such as ultrasound, ice/heat, and electrical stimulation, but rather foster an active approach focused on improving movement efficiency. Your therapist should be a good educator and provide an understanding of corrective exercise, posture, and movement training, to empower you to self manage and improve your condition.

Q46. What can I do prior to arriving for my first session to help improve my situation?

Get More Sleep:

Sleep is an essential function and a top priority in the physical therapy process. Simply stated, if you are not sleeping well, then you are not healing well, and your pain level will increase. Without going in to too much detail here, lack of sleep is associated with increased stress hormone, or Cortisol, levels in the blood, which can increase inflammatory response and pain levels. Chronic fatigue and pain syndromes can originate from prolonged deprivation or poor quality of sleep. Proper positioning with the body in neutral, a quality mattress, and relaxation strategies are important components we teach in physical therapy to facilitate this process. If you typically need eight hours, try to get 1-2 hours more, if you can, when you need to heal an injury.

Sit Less:

Sitting for prolonged periods (standing can be harmful as well, but that is for another discussion) has been linked with many adverse health effects as seen in this link to a New York Times article <https://well.blogs.nytimes.com/2016/03/29/sitting-increases-the-risk-of-dying-early/> . Also, from the perspective of mechanics, static sitting tends to be tough on the spine and contributes to restricted hip flexor mobility-- not helpful for reducing back pain with walking and standing. From a health perspective, we are meant to move, so do it regularly and often.

Q47. How important is cardiovascular exercise in my recovery?

Cardiovascular exercise is one of the most powerful producers of our own natural pain-reducing hormones, endorphins. Not only do endorphins reduce pain, they also promote healthy brain chemistry, improving our memory, mental acuity, and feeling of well being. Our only word of caution here is to choose an exercise that is appropriate for your current condition and fitness level. Start slowly. If walking is currently painful for you, then this would not be a wise choice. Instead, pick cycling, swimming, etc... if you know that your body handles it better.

Q48. Does my mind set make a difference in my pain level and recover process?

Be Confident You Will Improve:

If you truly believe nothing can help you, then you are right, nothing will. It is essential that you believe you will improve. The hope and belief that something will work is the driving force that creates action to pursue solutions and to work towards a goal. I have seen patients with severe conditions progress beautifully in treatment and get back to thriving in life. I have also seen people with relatively minor conditions fail to improve as they should. Attitude and belief are key factors in both. Truly believe you will thrive--no matter what--and you will!

Q49. Why should I pick Thrive Physical Therapy as opposed to another location?

Great question! There are a variety of reasons why. First and foremost we understand the problems that 40-64+ year old people have and how to solve it! Proof of this is the fact that we score from 47-87% higher on improving pain/disability scores in our patients/clients than national averages. See our most recent report card/results comparing us to other offices around the country <http://www.thriveptva.com/thrive-results-clinic-report-card/> Second, we have been chosen by our patients/clients as the best practice in Central Virginia for the last 4 years 2014-2017 (and Expertise Richmond). Third, we provide a higher level one on one hands-on corrective care exclusively by a PT without use of aids or technicians. And last but not least, every part of your care from front desk, clinical care, educational delivery, etc... has been crafted to provide you not only results, but an amazing experience that is both enjoyable and effective that you cannot get anywhere else!

Conclusion

So, there you have it: 40 Questions answered (plus 9 bonuses) that will hopefully give you incite regarding PT and help you to make better more informed decisions regarding your health going forward. More, you've just read the most common concerns, questions and any misconceptions surrounding Physical Therapy. I hope the answers have provided you with clarity, debunked any myths and eliminated any skepticism that may have been a barrier to accessing a valuable service. We have seen a large number of people have amazing results and get back to the activities they love and thriving in life. In the coming weeks, we will be sending you more advice on how to improve your health and to regain your active lifestyle. I hope you enjoy the information and that you will use it to achieve your goals. We hope this is the beginning of a long-term relationship with us at Thrive Physical Therapy. We want to provide you with the information and care you need to achieve a healthy, active lifestyle and to thrive in life!

In good health,

C. Clarke Tanner PT, MPT, COMT, ATC, CSCS, FMSC, TPI
Physical Therapist, Owner, Founder Thrive Physical Therapy Inc.

[thriveptva.com/](http://www.thriveptva.com/)

Health Advice Disclaimer

We are giving general information that we have seen help our patients with a variety of spine -related disorders. It is not intended to be specific to your condition, nor can we determine if it is the best course of action for you without knowing about your history,

condition, and undergoing a thorough physical exam by a licensed physical therapist. Each individual's presentation, progression through the rehabilitation, and results are unique and varied, depending on multiple factors. Significant injury risk is possible if you do not follow due diligence and seek suitable professional medical advice about your injury prior to participation in any exercise or corrective program. Thrive Physical Therapy does not expressly imply or guarantee specific results from the material contained in this report. Following these suggestions is at your own risk without prior consultation with an appropriately qualified medical professional.

Copyright Pending Notice

©2017 Thrive Physical Therapy Inc. All rights reserved.

Any unauthorized use by sharing, reproduction, or distribution of these materials is strictly prohibited. No portion of these materials may be reproduced in any manner without the expressed written consent of the publisher. Published under the copyright laws of the USA

