

Results Testimonial



“After my injury I was afraid I would never walk correctly again. Mary Lou and the dedicated staff were very supportive and worked incredibly hard to get me back on my feet. I can only walk correctly, but I can run. And I am ready to return to work at the fire department. I will always be grateful for all the did for me.”

-S.H.

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Golden Years

In old age, common patient issues include arthritis, osteoporosis, balance disorders, and fall-related injuries. Geriatric physical therapists can help rehabilitate such patients. Physical therapy at this stage can also be preventative by improving flexibility, strength, balance, and overall well-being, according to the National Council on Aging. One study of 40 healthy older adults, for example, found that flexibility training resulted in “improvements in joint motion, as well as increased freely chosen gait speed.”² These mobility gains would likely make athletics easier.

As you can see, physical therapy can help athletes of all ages overcome injuries, often just as effectively as invasive procedures. If you’re focused on ensuring your patients remain fit and mobile enough to become lifelong athletes, we’d love to work with you to incorporate physical therapy into their treatment plans.



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Physician Update

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Help Your Patients Become Lifelong Athletes A Look at Physical Therapy’s Uses Over Time

For many people, sports are more than a passing interest; they’re a lifelong pursuit. Exercise gives athletes an outlet for their energy, keeps them mobile and physically fit, and may even help improve the symptoms of mental health disorders like depression and anxiety.⁵ Unfortunately, engaging in athletic activities comes with risks, including musculoskeletal injuries.

In order to maintain an active lifestyle over time, athletes need to seek treatment for the injuries they experience on and off the playing field. These strains, sprains, breaks, and other conditions vary depending on age, their sport of choice, and other factors. For those who want to be lifelong athletes, nothing is more vital than making a complete recovery.

Physicians have many treatment options they can utilize to make this happen. Depending on the injury, these options include physical therapy, Kinesio taping, corticosteroid injections, surgery, and more. Over years of study, physical therapy has proven to be an effective, noninvasive treatment option for many common sports injuries. It can keep athletes fit and help them play for decades.

Youth

According to the Hospital for Special Surgery, sports and recreational injuries send 2.6 million young Americans to the emergency room each year. Common afflictions include concussions, sprains and strains, overuse injuries like “Little League” elbow and shoulder, and spondylolysis, according to the HSS and Stanford Children’s Health.

Physical therapy has long been considered a key component of the recovery process for these injuries and can often render surgery unnecessary. In a 2007 study of 436 juvenile and adolescent patients with symptomatic spondylolysis, for example, researchers found that 95% of patients treated with a custom-fit thoracolumbar orthosis, a three-month break from the sport, and physical therapy “achieved excellent results.” The program



returned the patients’ back spasms, hamstring tightness, and limited range of motion to normal.⁴

Middle Age

Adult athletes struggle with their own set of common injuries, including tendonitis and low back pain. As we’ve previously discussed, when comparing surgery, sham surgery, and exercise-based therapies, researchers in a 2019 review of 12 studies found surgery was not superior to sham surgery, and exercise was recommended.¹ Similarly, a randomized trial comparing surgical decompression and physical therapy as treatment options for lumbar spinal stenosis found that in adults aged 50 or older, “Surgical decompression yielded similar effects to a PT regimen among patients with LSS who were surgical candidates.”³

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¹ Challoumas D, Clifford C, Kirwan P, et al. (2019). How does surgery compare to sham surgery or physiotherapy as a treatment for tendinopathy? A systematic review of randomised trials. *BMJ Open Sport & Exercise Medicine*, 5:e00528. doi: 10.1136/bmjsem-2019-000528

² Christiansen, C. L. (2008). The Effects of Hip and Ankle Stretching on Gait Function of Older People. *Archives of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation*, 89(8), 1421–1428. doi:10.1016/j.apmr.2007.12.043

³ Delitto, A., Piva, S. R., Moore, C. G., Fritz, J. M., Wisniewski, S. R., Josbeno, D. A., ... Welch, W. C. (2015). Surgery Versus Nonsurgical Treatment of Lumbar Spinal Stenosis. *Annals of Internal Medicine*, 162(7), 465. doi:10.7326/m14-1420

⁴ Kurd, M. F., Patel, D., Norton, R., Picetti, G., Friel, B., & Vaccaro, A. R. (2007). Nonoperative Treatment of Symptomatic Spondylolysis. *Journal of Spinal Disorders & Techniques*, 20(8), 560–564. doi:10.1097/bsd.0b013e31803dcddd

⁵ Morgan, A. J., Parker, A. G., Alvarez-Jimenez, M., & Jorm, A. F. (2013). Exercise and mental health: an exercise and sports science Australia commissioned review. *Journal of Exercise Physiology Online*, 16(4).