



**Western
Pennsylvania
Sports Medicine &
Rehabilitation Clinic Inc.**

Effective Therapy from Experienced Professionals



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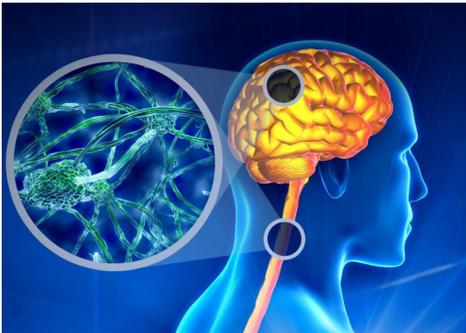
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Multiple Sclerosis and the Burden It Brings



Multiple Sclerosis (MS) is a clinical condition characterized by a loss of the myelin tissue that surrounds the nerves and aids in normal conduction of electrical impulses.

Common symptoms include weakness in the arms or legs, loss of balance and problems with mobility and bladder function. While the condition itself cannot be cured, treatment is aimed at slowing down the progression of the disease and helping patients recover to a point where

they are independent at home. Physical therapy plays an important role in the rehabilitation process and improves quality of life for patients with MS.

The purpose of physical therapy is to ensure that the patient maintains a degree of functionality and is able to perform daily activities without too much difficulty.

The Various Stages of Multiple Sclerosis

Physical therapy is an important part of the treatment process during the different stages of MS. During the initial evaluation, the therapist will determine if there are any limitations with skin sensation, muscle strength and overall function.

As the disease progresses, acute attacks are likely to occur and the patient may need to be hospitalized. In such cases, a physical therapist will work closely with physicians and other specialists in the healthcare team to complement their efforts and to ensure quick recovery for the patient.



MS can also present as a slow, progressive condition that relapses a number of times and seems to 'go away'. Don't be fooled, because it can cause severe limitations over time.

In some situations, the side-effects are minimal and daily life is not impaired. Each person's progression is different. Your physical therapist will always assess the most important functional problems affecting you and will address those needs in a comprehensive, customized treatment program.

SPOTLIGHT



Steve Podratsky, MPT

MPT: Slippery Rock University
BS: Health Science
Member: American Physical Therapy Association

A native of Johnstown, Steve has practiced in our Somerset office since the 1990's. Steve takes a personal interest in his patients and their recovery. As such he has developed a loyal following of satisfied patients over the years.

Steve is very much a "hands on" therapist with a particular expertise in manual physical therapy techniques for the treatment of back, neck and other neurological conditions. He also is skilled in Balance/Vestibular therapy as well as general orthopedic conditions.

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This is How We Help...

Supervised, controlled exercise is the foundation of physical therapy treatment. As patients tend to fatigue quickly, exercise plans are designed to be simple and gradual. Exercise programs are also designed to be intermittent to prevent sudden 'attacks' of pain and discomfort. Here are some of the benefits of physical therapy in MS.

1. **Correction of posture and improved trunk control** – Patients with MS are at risk of falling, so physical therapy is aimed at controlling posture and balance to minimize the risk of falls.
2. **Increasing functional independence with walking aids** – To improve independence and movement, a physical therapist may prescribe aids including walkers, canes, and custom made foot orthoses (supports). Conditions such as foot drop and loss of sensation in the lower extremities may warrant the use of additional orthoses.
3. **Enhancing mobility** – Mobility is an important prerequisite to patient independence. Joint and muscle stiffness (especially in the legs) can be corrected with stretching exercises. Stiffness in the neck muscles can affect neck and head posture and control, which can also be corrected with supports and exercise.
4. **Restoration of muscle tone** - Increased tone (hypertonia) or decreased muscle tone (hypotonia) is a result of the impact of MS on the nerves. A physical therapist may use manual techniques to improve joint sensation and restore normal muscle tone.

Physical therapists play an important role in the management of patients with MS and several other conditions affecting the nerves, muscles, bones, and joints. If you or someone you know needs help, we are just a phone call away. There is a lot that physical therapists can do to help you (and everyone you know) live an independent, pain-free lifestyle. ***Give us a call today, and we'll show you what we can do for you.***

Western Pa Sports Medicine & Rehab Offers



Transportation Services For Our Patients!

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