

Orthopaedic Connection

MASSAGE THERAPY AND PHYSICAL THERAPY

By Thomas J. Haverbush M.D.
Orthopaedic Surgeon

Transforming patient information into patient understanding.

Orthopaedic surgeons use both of these health care professionals in the treatment of their patients.

Everyone knows at least something about the two fields and many people have received treatment by these professionals.

Several years ago in Michigan physical therapists worked only in hospitals or in clinics in which they were directly supervised by physicians. Directors of Physical Therapy departments were almost always physicians who are board certified in the specialty, Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation.

Eventually board certified physical therapists were allowed to open their own offices and treat patients outside the direct supervision of a physician.

Physical therapists however are not allowed to treat patients without a prescription for therapy written by a physician. There now exist in our area several physical therapy offices and physical therapy departments within all the hospitals.

Massage therapists often work within physical therapy offices and departments in conjunction with physical therapists, but they also can have their own offices in which they serve clients. They can provide their services without a prescription. They of course are not supervised by a physician as no prescription is required for their services. There are several types of massage, which are beyond the scope of this article to explain. Massage therapy offices also often provide a number of other personal appearance services like body wraps, facials, and exfoliation.

Some massage therapy offices teach strength training and toning as well. It varies a lot depending on the place.

As a part of a physical therapy office or department massage therapy can be very valuable as a direct treatment of body soft tissues including muscles, tendons, ligaments and joints. It is used to relieve stress and pain and to increase blood flow. Massage therapy can help on a specific area of tension, injury or soreness. It can result in pain reduction, reduce medication needs, increased range of motion and reduce scar tissue and adhesions.

Patient outcomes are often improved with the addition of massage therapy to the physical therapist's treatment. As you can see they do overlap in their goal of improving patient function and lessening pain.

As an Orthopaedic Surgeon I have the utmost respect for what these health care professionals do for patients. I could not imagine practicing without them to help me.

Gratiot County Herald Archive and Office Website.

I sincerely appreciate all of you loyal readers and patients present and future and welcome all newcomers!

Besides what you read today there is a huge treasure trove of Orthopaedic and musculoskeletal information at www.orthopodsurgeon.com. It contains the Website Library, Your Orthopaedic Connection and complete archive of every GCH article I have written.

I specialize in you. Be well.

Dr. Haverbush

