

# Argus Orthopaedic Zone

## My Perspective on Physical Therapy

By Thomas J. Haverbush, M.D.  
Orthopaedic Surgeon

### *Transforming patient information into patient understanding.*

Improving movement patterns and posture can boost your strength and increase your flexibility. Continued wellness is up to you.

If you have been diagnosed by me or someone else with osteoarthritis, rheumatoid arthritis or another type of arthritic disease I will almost certainly establish a treatment plan which includes a schedule of *medicinal therapy*. In addition I will recommend and prescribe physical therapy that will include an appointment with a physical therapist.

The role of medication is to reduce inflammation in your joints and it can usually accomplish that at least partially.

The physical therapist's goal on the other hand is to increase the patient's strength and flexibility and to minimize abnormal stress on the affected body part.

### **Improve Postural Patterns**

Much of what physical therapists do is postural education.

People often get into posture patterns and movement habits that can make a muscle become dominant that is causing the stress.

Physical therapists educate patients on ways to use the right muscles, the ones that are supposed to be dominant as the patient performs routine activities throughout the day. Therapy won't make you feel like an 18 year old (unless you are 18!). But if the therapist can improve a patient's posture habits and the way they bend, stand and walk, the patient can improve greatly and become much more comfortable and of course be more functional.

Remember what I always put at the end of each article? Our goal is simple – to help people return to more pain free, functional lives. The therapist's goal is the same actually.

When the patient is more comfortable and functional all kinds of activities become easier.

Think of a physical therapist as a movement expert. In treating arthritis therapists know what can make a joint mad and they understand what needs to happen in order to make a joint happy.

### **Prescription**

A physical therapist needs a prescription that another doctor or I would write for the specific therapy needed. You can't just go into a physical therapy place and tell them your symptoms and get some therapy. Same as you can't walk into a pharmacy and get specific medication for a condition without a prescription. See what I mean. While many physical therapists are not operating directly under a doctor's supervision they are in a sense, because the doctor has to write a prescription for them to act. They often have a lot of leeway in how they apply the therapy, however.

The prescription addresses the problem or symptoms and gives the therapist some guidance in what the treatment should be. Also included is a time aspect such as 2 or 3 times per week up to 4 – 6 weeks as needed at the therapist's discretion.

We are about halfway through where I'd like to go with this so I think I will stop for now and continue next week. See you then.

**Argus Orthopaedic Zone Archive and Office Website**

What if there was a whole world of musculoskeletal information at one place? There is!

[www.orthopodsurgeon.com](http://www.orthopodsurgeon.com) opens up for you the office website, Your Orthopaedic Connection and the Archive of all previous Argus articles I have written for you, your family and friends.

Please check it out. Do yourself a favor.

Be well.

Dr. Haverbush