

CONSUMER AWARENESS GUIDE: CHOOSING THE RIGHT PHYSICAL THERAPIST

We at Ultimate Physical Therapy feel that if physical therapy is prescribed to you by your doctor it is of vital importance to your health that you choose the best people in the business.

If you are suffering from a musculoskeletal condition physical therapy is one of the first choices your doctor will recommend because of its conservative and non-invasive nature. If you were to end up choosing a second rate physical therapy clinic and your condition does not improve, you and your doctor might come to the conclusion that physical therapy was an insufficient means of treating you. Unfortunately more invasive and risky procedures will probably be the next recommendation by your doctor, when if you had chosen a more qualified clinic those options might never need to be explored.

We have heard this scenario over and over and have repeatedly helped people at our clinic that were treated unsuccessfully using other conservative measures including physical therapy.

We hope that by reading on you will be able to make a more educated decision with your health when choosing a physical therapy clinic.

5 Questions to ask before stepping into a PT office

- 1.** Will I be treated by my PT on each visit or will I be treated by less skilled staff?

What sounds like a ridiculous question is not at all. The model of operation mentioned above is commonplace in outpatient orthopedic PT practices. The therapist will do the initial evaluation and successive visits either athletic trainers or PT aides will lead you through 90% or more of the treatment plan.

- 2.** Will much of my treatment time be used for treatments that I can do on my own?

This is another way that chiropractors and physical therapy clinics can get away with overbooking appointments. Ten minutes or more of several modalities like heat, ice and electrical stimulation can take you most of the way through a session without any benefit from your therapists skills.

3. Is your practice overbooked to the point that the success of my treatment might be compromised?

Most facilities in New York now are either chain operations or physician owned practices. These facilities owners are, in almost all cases, not the caregivers, they are in the business primarily for the bottom line. The problem with this is there is pressure from the top for therapists to see as many patients daily as possible. In these clinics therapists cope with the overflow of patients by coming up with protocols of treatment for a condition with no time allowed to address the different individual needs of the patient. No condition is the same even if it is diagnosed the same therefore it should never be treated as such.

4. Will my underlying problem be addressed or will therapy be primarily focused on just treating symptoms?

The main reason that people find physical therapy failed in treating their ailment is that we have found the area of complaint is usually not the source of the problem. In the human body, the structures that are failing due to weakness or tightness place more stress on the surrounding structures which in turn start to produce a pain response. Therefore treating otherwise healthy tissue complaining of pain is missing the underlying problem and will have no lasting effect.

5. When I am finished with therapy will I have a good understanding of the problem and how I can continue to manage it on my own?

Yes, you will at **Ultimate Physical Therapy**. With restrictions that managed care has placed on benefits it is vitally important that you the patient, under the guidance of your PT, become an active participant in your recovery. It is our goal to properly target the source of the problem so that a comprehensive home exercise program can be implemented as soon as possible. This not only

helps speed results but it also allows you the patient to become familiar with the therapy program that will help you in the future.