

# The Basic Science of Physical Therapy

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# What is a Physical Therapist?

*“Physical therapists (PTs) are health care professionals who diagnose and treat individuals of all ages... who have medical problems or other health-related conditions that limit their abilities to move and perform functional activities in their daily lives... PTs examine each individual and develop a plan using treatment techniques to promote the ability to move, reduce pain, restore function, and prevent disability. In addition, PTs work with individuals to prevent the loss of mobility before it occurs by developing fitness- and wellness-oriented programs for healthier and more active lifestyles.”*

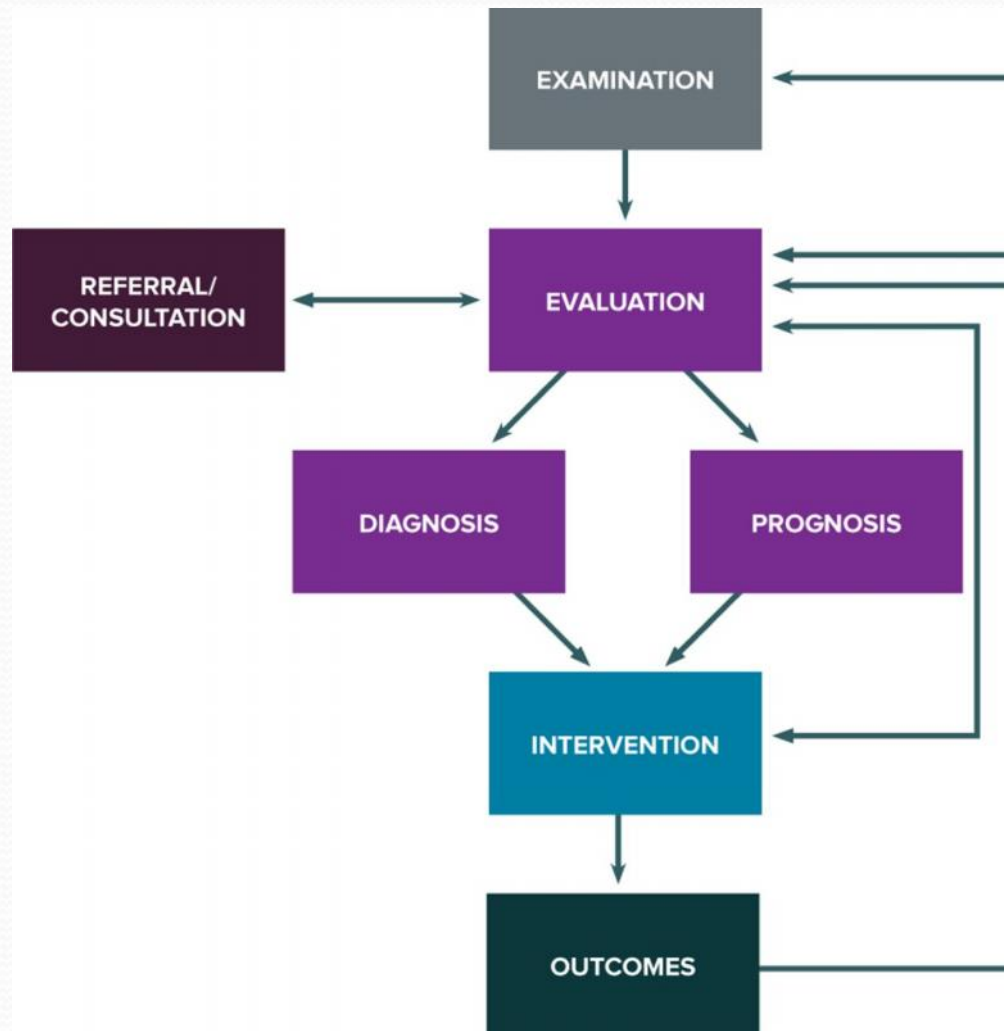
*American Physical Therapy Association (APTA)*



# Physical Therapy

- Provide service to patients with an impairment, disability, or disease which limits their functional baseline
- Diagnose and manage movement dysfunction
- Restore function and movement
- Optimize quality of life
- Avoid surgery and prescription drugs
- Prevent progression of symptoms
- Promote fitness and wellness

# The Patient Management Process




# Examination

- History
- Systems Review
  - Abbreviated review of musculoskeletal, neuromuscular, cardio-pulmonary and integumentary systems
  - Assess communication ability, language and learning style
- Tests and Measures
  - Determine causes of impairment or activity limitations
  - Rule in or out hypotheses

## It's a Stretch



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# Evaluation

- Interpret findings and synthesizes information from examination
- Determine physical therapy diagnosis
- Determine prognosis
- Establish goals
  - Impairment level goals
  - Functional goals
- Develop plan of care



# Intervention

- Manual Therapy
- Therapeutic exercise
- Functional training or ergonomics
- Neuromuscular re-education and training
- Modalities
- Assistive devices
- Patient education



# Outcomes

- Functional Outcome Measures
  - Quick DASH
  - Neck Disability Index
  - The Back Index
  - AM-PAC
- Goal achievement
- Discharge planning
  - Ending service for episode of care based upon outcomes and achievement of goals

# Support Staff

- Physical Therapist Assistants
  - Licensed professional
  - Graduate of PTA associate degree program
  - Provides large scope of Physical Therapy services
- Physical Therapy Aides
  - Non-licensed, specially trained under the direction of a PT
  - Provides direct and non-direct patient care

# References

- *Guide to Physical Therapist Practice 3.0*. Alexandria, VA: American Physical Therapy Association; 2014. Available at: <http://guidetoptpractice.apta.org/>. Accessed April 7, 2016.
- Principles of Physical Therapist Patient and Client Management. *Guide to Physical Therapist Practice 3.0*. Alexandria, VA: American Physical Therapy Association; 2014. Available at: <http://guidetoptpractice.apta.org/content/1/SEC2.body>. Accessed April 7, 2016.

