

# What to Expect from Your Physical Therapy Treatment Session



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PHYSICAL THERAPY

## How Long Can You Expect Your Session to Last

Typically, a physical therapy appointment can take anywhere from **30 to 90 minutes** with the average time being **60 minutes**. Many rehab programs consist of two or three visits per week. Sometimes, sessions are done once a week. Your specific program will depend on variable factors.

## What to Wear

Be prepared to move around a lot during your first physical therapy session. With that in mind, choose clothing that is easy to move around in. If you have shoulder pain, wear a shirt that allows access to your shoulder and arm.

Shorts or something easy to pull up over the knee or easy to lower should be worn if you have hip pain, low back pain, knee pain, or ankle pain.

## Your Initial Evaluation

After your physical therapist talks to you about your condition, they will then perform an examination. Your PT will focus on measuring impairments that may be causing your problem or that may be affected by your injury.

Common measurements taken during a physical therapy examination include:

- Palpation
- Range of motion (ROM) measurements
- Tests of strength
- Functional mobility
- Balance
- Neurological screening tests

Once the exam is complete, you can get started on your PT treatment plan.

## Setting up Your Treatment Plan

After your examination, your PT will have a pretty clear idea of a treatment plan to start working on decreasing your pain and improving your mobility.

Your physical therapist may start treatment after your initial evaluation. They may use therapeutic modalities like ultrasound or electrical stimulation to help manage your pain and improve your muscle function.

Exercise is one of the staples of any rehab program. After your initial evaluation, your physical therapist could prescribe a list of exercises to do at home and provide you a detailed print-out to help keep you on track.

Your PT will also make recommendations about how frequently to return for treatments. Many rehab programs consist of two or three weekly visits. Sometimes, sessions are done once a week. Your specific program will depend on variable factors including your pain level, current level of mobility and your physician's orders.