

## **What happens during my first visit?**

At your first appointment, you will be evaluated by a licensed physical therapist which will include time for your therapist to get to know you so that they may better understand your injury. Each patient's situation is unique and your plan of care will be set up just for you.

During your first visit:

- You will be seen for an initial evaluation by the therapist. During this evaluation, the therapist will discuss:
  1. Your medical history.
  2. Your current problems/complaints.
  3. Your pain intensity, what aggravates and eases the problem.
  4. How this pain impacts your daily activities or your functional limitations.
  5. Your goals with physical therapy.
  6. Medications, tests, and procedures related to your health.
  
- The therapist will then perform the objective evaluation which may include some of the following:
  1. Palpation – the therapist touches around the area of the pain/problem to check for tenderness, swelling, soft tissue integrity, tissue temperature, inflammation, etc.
  2. Range of Motion (ROM) - the therapist moves the joint(s) to check for quality of movement and any restrictions.
  3. Muscle Testing - the therapist may check for strength and the quality of the muscle contraction, with any pain and weakness noted. Muscle strength may be graded. This is also part of a neurological screening.
  4. Neurological Screening - the therapist may check to see how the nerves are communicating with the muscles, sensing touch, pain, vibration or temperature. Reflex testing is also included as part of neurological screening.
  5. Special Tests - the therapist may perform special tests to confirm/rule out the presence of additional problems.
  6. Posture Assessment - the positions of joints relative to ideal and each other may be assessed.
  7. The therapist will then formulate a list of problems you are having, and how to treat those problems. A plan is subsequently developed with the patient's input. This includes how many times you should see the therapist per week, how many weeks you will need therapy, home programs, patient education, short-term/long-term goals, and what is expected after discharge from therapy. This plan is created with input from you, your therapist, and your doctor.