

Physical Therapy Across the Lifespan



Older Adulthood

As we age, new health challenges can arise and strength can decline. Physical therapy helps improve function, encourage activity, and prevent injuries — empowering older adults to maintain independence and a high quality of life.

“I want to keep up with my grandkids ...”

“I want to avoid falls ...”

“I want to manage my chronic pain without relying on opioids or prescription pain medications.”

Why Physical Therapy Matters for People in Older Adulthood

Living a full, independent life often means staying active and confident, but for many older adults, the fear of falling — or even a fall itself — can significantly diminish their quality of life, leading to injury or a loss of independence. Physical therapy can improve balance, muscle strength, and endurance can help to reduce the risk for falls.

Beyond falls, the challenges of frailty — which can leave muscles weak and energy low — and the impact of stroke or chronic disease, can severely limit movement and function, and threaten independence. Physical therapists and physical therapist assistants help improve strength, flexibility, balance, and aerobic capacity (ability of the heart and lungs to get oxygen to muscles).

How Physical Therapy Helps Older Adults Thrive

Physical therapists and physical therapist assistants help older adults:

- ✓ Boost balance and prevent falls
- ✓ Maintain independence and mobility
- ✓ Stay active and engaged in the things they enjoy
- ✓ Manage chronic pain
- ✓ Improve strength and endurance for daily life

Examples of Common Specialty Areas in Older Adulthood May Include:

- **Geriatrics Physical Therapy:** Focuses on improving function and quality of life for older adults
- **Neurologic Physical Therapy:** Addresses conditions affecting the brain such as Parkinson’s, stroke, ALS, MS, and nerves
- **Cardiovascular & Pulmonary Physical Therapy:** Provides prevention and rehabilitation care for people who are at risk for, or diagnosed with, heart, lung, and other health conditions
- **Orthopaedic Physical Therapy:** Provides physical rehabilitation for people with pain, injury, or diseases of the muscles, bones, or joints that limit mobility and addresses osteoporosis



Physical therapists can be visited directly without a referral in all 50 states and Washington, D.C. Take the next step to maintain your health and independence. Visit [ChoosePT.com/find-a-pt](https://www.choosept.com/find-a-pt) to find a physical therapist near you.