

# 5 Questions to Ask When Choosing the Right Physical Therapist

Finding the right physical therapist for you can be a powerful first step in your recovery. Here are 5 questions to help you make a choice.

When it comes to healing the body after injury or illness, physical therapists are like the wizards behind the curtain. They often can explain what's happening with your body, why it's happening, and they can help you work through it.

At NorthShore, physical therapists treat general orthopaedic and neurological conditions, as well as sports medicine injuries, urinary incontinence, cancer, and issues associated with aging. They specialize in a variety of treatment approaches, including:

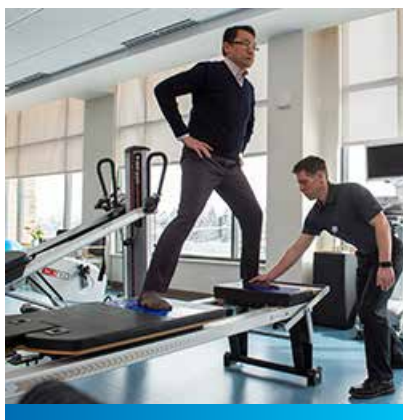
**Manual Therapy**

**Pain Management**

**Exercise**  
(including aquatic therapy)

**Ergonomics**

**Education**



However, choosing the right physical therapist is key to making sure you follow through with recovery and get your body back. If your physician gives you a referral for a specific therapist, you can go to that referral, but also know that you have options.

Take your health into your own hands, and do a little research. Here are five questions to ask when choosing a physical therapist:

## 1 Which services does the physical therapy clinic you want to go to offer?

In addition to having extensive training, many physical therapists specialize in a specific area of the body or condition. They may even be board certified in specific patient groups, such as geriatrics or orthopedics. Depending on the severity of your health issue, it may be best to seek out someone who specializes in what you need.

## 2 Does the clinic take your insurance?

You don't want to go broke paying for physical therapy or deal with the headache later of sorting out who pays for what. Make sure to call the clinic as well as your insurance company to double check that services will be covered. You may have a co-pay; inquire about that as well so you know how to prepare financially. Also be sure to ask if your insurance requires authorization prior to your first appointment so that there is no delay in starting your therapy.

## 3 What is the clinic's cancellation policy?

Find out if the therapy clinic charges a cancellation fee and how much notice you have to give to avoid that (standard is 24 hours). If you have an emergency and can't make an appointment at the last minute, you'll know ahead of time if there's a charge.

## 4 How many patients does the therapist see at a time?

There's no evidence to support how many patients a physical therapist should see at a time: one, two, or three. But you may have a preference. If you want one-on-one attention, find out if the therapist you want to see offers that. If s/he sees more than one patient at a time but you still want to work with that particular therapist, you will know ahead of time and can adjust your expectations.

## 5 Will I see the same therapist for every appointment?

Clinics schedule appointments differently: some with the same physical therapist for each appointment and others with whichever therapist is available. There are benefits to both. In the former, you can develop a relationship with one therapist, and in the latter, you'll experience a variety of treatment approaches. Make a request based on what you prefer.

NorthShore has multiple physical therapy [clinic sites](#) throughout the North Shore and Chicago. For a full list of our services, please visit [our website](#).