



Women's Health



What does a Women's Health Physical Therapist do?

The emphasis of the health sciences on fitness and wellness has brought to women's attention a need to pay closer attention to their bodies during recreation, work, and throughout life. Many physical therapists have specialized training which will benefit women with a variety of medical conditions. These therapists use every facet of their physical therapy training to evaluate and treat female clients, promoting and enhancing health through the life span. All treatments are individually designed after thorough evaluation.

What musculoskeletal issues are associated with the prenatal and postpartum periods?

The prenatal period is a time of great change for a woman, physically, emotionally, and hormonally. As the fetus grows, the overall musculoskeletal system is challenged by altered posture, shortened muscles, potential muscle imbalances, and changes in spinal mobility. These changes may cause pain and dysfunction. In the postpartum phase, fluctuating hormone levels combined with additional physical changes as a result of delivery may also result in musculoskeletal problems such as excessive joint mobility, weakness of the core stabilizers, and altered spinal mobility and function.

What causes dysfunction in the prenatal and postpartum periods?

Fluctuating hormone levels in both the prenatal and postpartum phases may cause excessive joint mobility which can cause pain and dysfunction. Because of the postural changes associated with pregnancy, some muscles become tight to support the changing posture, while others are stretched and become weak. This results in muscle imbalance and a potential for decreased stabilization. Mobility of the spine can be affected in both the prenatal and the postpartum periods as the spine adjusts to the changing posture as the fetus grows.

What are symptoms of musculoskeletal dysfunction during the prenatal and postpartum periods?

Symptoms of dysfunction may include pain in the joints of the pelvis or spine, muscular pain in the hips and L/E's, or numbness into the extremities. Weakness may be present in the abdominals, resulting in pain with transitional movements or lifting. Weakness may also be manifested as urinary incontinence in the postpartum period. Muscle imbalance may also cause pain or contribute to urinary issues in the postpartum phase.

How can physical therapy help?

Physical therapists are skilled in evaluating and providing patient centered treatment of musculoskeletal problems. Physical therapists trained in the area of women's health have further knowledge about issues directly related to women as they move through different stages of life, from childbearing years to the post menopausal period. Physical therapists can provide hands on treatment to address spinal and pelvic joint dysfunction, instruct in exercises to address muscle weakness and imbalance, and provide guidance and instruction related to modifications of activities of daily living that may be difficult during the prenatal and postpartum phases.



Pregnancy Program

Cutting Edge Physical Therapy specializes in women's health and have been the pioneers in this field for the past 16 years. We specialize in pre- and post-partum conditions as well as many of the problems that can occur during pregnancy. Our Physical Therapists have developed very specialized programs dealing with the many changes that occur in the body during pregnancy that can cause pain.

With over 16 year of experience and being the leaders in the community and state, thousands of pregnant women have had relief of their musculoskeletal pregnancy pain.



Common problems that occur during pregnancy and after pregnancy, can be very effectively treated and include:

- Sacroiliac joint dysfunction (SI jt)
- Pubic symphysis dysfunction and separation of the joints
- Sciatica
- Round ligament pain
- Postural changes causing pain anywhere in the body
- Rib dysfunction/subluxations
- Pre and Post-partum rehabilitation
- Generalized core weakness
- Diastasis recti
- Trigger points/spasms
- Pain of unknown origin
- Sprain of ligaments
- Strain of muscles from the neck all the way down the back to the tailbone
- Coccydynia (tailbone pain)
- Groin pain
- Postural insufficiency/weakness
- T/S or mid back, C/S or neck pain secondary to enlarged breasts
- Carpal Tunnel Syndrome
- Any musculoskeletal pain or dysfunction.



Other Women's Health Issues

Postpartum Pain

Many times after delivery of a baby, pain from pregnancy does not go away. If you were experiencing musculoskeletal pain during your pregnancy and you still have either the same or different pain after, you may benefit from Physical Therapy. Many things can happen during labor and delivery that can cause your pelvis out of alignment. This can also happen when women deliver by c-section. There are many manual therapy techniques that can correct this malalignment.

C-section scars can also cause musculoskeletal problems if the scar becomes adhered to the tissue below. Scar adhesions can become hypersensitive and cause pain. When they adhere to the tissue below, they create a pulling on the surrounding tissues that can lead to strain and cause pain as well as trigger points that can lead to chronic pelvic pain. This hypomobility of the c-section scar, or any abdominal scar, can also cause muscle imbalances that can pull on the pelvis and cause sacroiliac (SI) joint dysfunction.

Scar Tissue

Scar tissue can occur anywhere in the body and it is a natural part of the healing process. When we have surgery or get injured, scar tissue is necessary to heal the wound. Although this is usually a normal process, our bodies can be too good at doing this job and may lay down excessive scar tissue that is called keyloid scarring. Keyloid scarring can occur on the external portion of the scar that is visible and presents as a thickened scar that remains that way long after the healing has occurred. Keyloid scarring can also occur on the inside and may not be visible from the outside of the scar but can be forming excessive scar tissue inside to other structures. When this occurs, it can lead to many problems.

The scar itself may be very sensitive and even clothing rubbing against it may cause discomfort or pain.

This can lead to an abnormal body response in the tissues as well as the nerves. Scar desensitization may need to be performed to assist in making the scar not as sensitive. If the scar adheres either inside or outside or both, this can cause many problems. Scar tissue can adhere to other organs such as the uterus, bladder or bowels that can lead to chronic pelvic pain and chronic inflammation.

There are many things that can be done to assist the excessive scar tissue in breaking up and laying down in the correct way. Our physical therapists can perform techniques to assist in breaking the excessive scar tissue as well as teach you techniques you can perform at home to assist in your healing which will minimize the effects.

