



American Naturopathic Association

The oldest and original Naturopathic organization since 1919

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□ POSITION PAPER □

PHYSIOTHERAPY

Physiotherapy is a collective term for the various adjunctive therapies applied to patients that have been enumerated in the various legal descriptions of Naturopathy. They include:

Mechanotherapy	Phototherapy
Articular manipulation	Heliotherapy
Kinetotherapy (corrective exercise)	Chromotherapy
Hydrotherapy	Vibrotherapy
Thermotherapy	Thalassotherapy
Electrotherapy	Vasopneumatic therapy
Zone Therapy	Phytobalneology

In the first half of the 20th Century naturopaths, osteopaths, and chiropractors all delivered various physiotherapies as part of their work, at a time when mainstream medicine concentrated on drugs and surgery. For the medical mainstream, physiotherapy was mostly an afterthought; a lowly practice associated with athletic trainers, and was delegated to support staff in hospitals when needed.

As more people were lured to the successes of the “irregular” doctors, the medical profession created “Physical Medicine” to compete, in the 1940s. MDs who specialized in this work came to be called physiatrists. When medicine started to become a big money industry and medical doctors needed to spend less time with a patient, the role of the physical therapist was born. Physical Therapy as a distinct profession grew from the 1950s on, and today the physical therapist is the one that the public most associates with these modalities.

Because of their historical use by Doctors of Naturopathy, because of their unchanging benefit to a suffering public, and because a naturopath can deliver these services at an overall more affordable cost, the American Naturopathic Association endorses the instruction of physiotherapy in our schools and encourages its continued use in practice.