

Post-Care Exercise Therapy

This refers to the use of a personal trainer or other fitness specialist after being released from a medical or healthcare program. It represents one of the most important stages of spinecare. The type of exercise habits developed after a course of non-operative or operative spinecare influences long-term recovery and reduces the risk of recurrent problems. Regular exercise should be used to improve and maintain spine and related extremity function. Spine physicians and other spinecare professionals often recommended the used of a personal trainer or exercise specialist after being released from supervised care.

What is Cooperative Spinecare?

Cooperative spinecare refers to two or more healthcare professionals, who work together to preserve or restore spinehealth and function while prioritizing the patient's well-being. Some spine conditions require a team approach to the achieve necessary therapeutic goals.

Working with a multidisciplinary spinecare team increases the chances of a good outcome.

Online Public Information Center

To learn more about the spine, go to the online Public Information Center (PIC) of the International Spine Association (ISA) located at www.SpineInformation.org. The PIC represents a large multimedia database of "need-to-know" information about the spine, spine disorders and available spinecare. The ISA also has a link to the International Directory of Spinecare Professionals. Go to the directory to locate an exercise specialist and to build or to locate your spinecare team. Directory profiles acknowledge spine specialists, who have achieved advanced credentialing through the American Academy of Spine Physicians (AASP).

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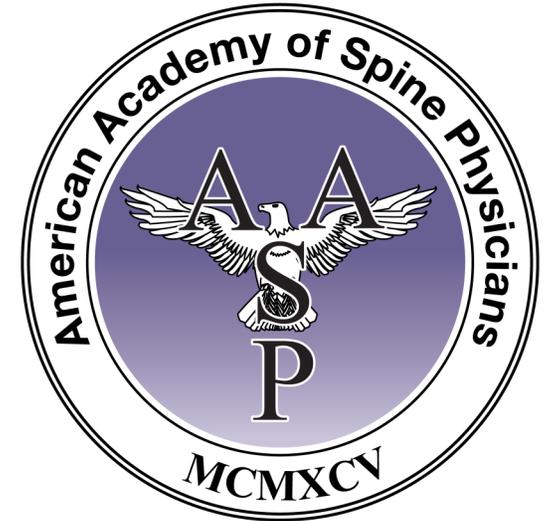
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Role of the EXERCISE SPECIALIST in Spinecare



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An organization of health professionals
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The Exercise Specialist

The term, “exercise specialist,” refers to an individual who has received training in exercise and in the body’s response to exercise. The term exercise specialist is broad and encompasses many qualified individuals, such as the fitness specialist, personal fitness trainer/instructor, certified exercise instructor, strength and conditioning coach and the exercise physiologist. It is common for some individuals to have more than one certification or area of training.

The guided fitness approach may include the use of exercise devices or machines, a group class, and/or a personalized low tech hands on approach. It often includes postural training, flexibility exercises and progressive resistive exercise.

Most exercise specialists are experienced working with individuals with spine and related functional considerations. They often work in gyms and health clubs and other such facilities.



The Order of Spinecare

The order of spinecare is quite simple and should follow a basic premise. It should begin with the most appropriate level of conservative care. Exercise therapy constitutes a form of conservative care. The therapeutic approach should only become more aggressive if the condition has not responded to more conservative methods. Spine surgery should always be a last resort. The attending specialist should attempt to use the approach which offers the greatest gain with the least risk and work the physician’s direction, as needed.

The Exercise Plan

The development of an exercise plan often requires specialized functional assessment by a physician, physical therapist or exercise specialist. The evaluation may include assessment of strength, stability, power, endurance, range of motion, balance, reaction time and coordination. Prior to referral to a fitness specialist, the patient is often seen by a physician, who is trained in musculoskeletal disorders.

The General Indications for Exercise

Some patients with chronic neck pain, back pain, or other related spine conditions require an ongoing course of exercise therapy. A patient may be referred for exercise therapy by one or more of their physicians. Many individuals pursue it on their own. Regular exercise therapy should be considered to help improve spine stability and physical performance. General indications for regular exercise include;

- Limited range of motion
- Muscle weakness
- Deconditioning
- Incoordination
- Post-Op prevention of adhesions/scar tissue
- Postural and/or gait abnormalities
- Core (abdominal/pelvic) muscle weakness
- Weight management

Regular exercise helps provide spine stability and restoration of function.

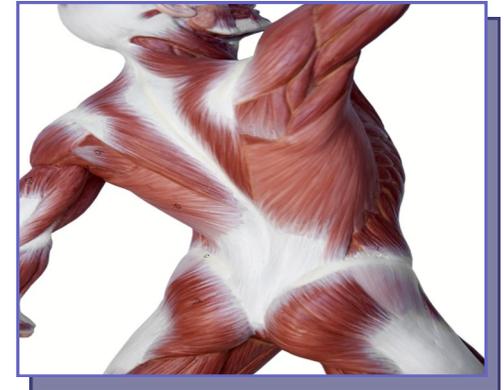
Goals of Exercise

Include:

- Pain reduction
- Improvement of spine stability
- Improvement of reaction time
- Improvement of balance and postural stability
- Improvement of gait
- Reduction of restrictive scar tissue
- Improvement of muscle strength and coordination

The Influence of Exercise on the Spine

The spine is intricate and dynamic,. It is comprised of specialized cells and tissues which undergo constant change, a process often referred to as “remodeling.” The pattern of tissue recovery, repair, and remodeling is influenced by the physical stresses placed upon the spine. These changes can be positively influenced by regular exercise.



Exercise and the Deep Spinal Muscles

There are numerous small and deep muscles which run between adjacent vertebrae at all levels of the spine. Exercises used to train these deep spinal muscles help provide stability to spinal segments, help restore spinal flexibility and help reduce the risk of progressive or recurrent spinal pain syndromes.

Functional Outcomes

The term, “functional outcome”, refers to the level of physical performance one is capable of after a period of exercise. Functional outcomes vary between individuals. It is dependent on numerous factors, such as the duration and intensity of exercise, as well as, an individual’s general health and spinehealth. Functional outcomes will also be influenced by the level of expertise and instruction provided by a supervising fitness/exercise specialist.