

Rehab Professionals

Friends For Life

By: Derek Spinney, PT, CSCS Director of Rehabilitation Services Eisenhower Medical Center



Eisenhower Medical Center Physical Therapist Mitzi Reul, PT works with patient Hugh Webb.

If you are like most people, once you find something that works — you want to use it again and again. It becomes that favorite restaurant, that favorite tool in your toolbox, or perhaps that special mechanic who keeps your car in tune.

But what about the people who keep your body in tune? Just like finding a great physician, you also want to find that therapy professional who knows your body well...the intricacies of your musculoskeletal and nervous systems, the excessive or lack of movement, the stable or unstable core, the limits of your endurance.

A Partnership

Physical, occupational, and speech therapists are now forging lifelong relationships with patients. Like primary care physicians, therapists are intervening during times of need, making recommendations to improve certain medical conditions, and enhancing an individual's health and lifestyle — beyond the healing of an injury.

Most health professionals can give advice for a low grade muscle or tendon sprain or strain — typically RICE (Rest, Ice, Compression, Elevation). Most patients will also find their way to their local drug store for over-the-counter non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medications such as aspirin, ibuprofen (Motrin®), and naproxen (Aleve®). However, an experienced rehabilitation professional can pave a faster road to recovery and help to prevent injury in the future.

The Root Cause

A good physical or occupational therapist looks for clues to the causes of injury, and can provide education and exercise or activities for faster healing and return to full function. Individual body type, muscle strength, overall health, joint integrity, positional alignment or posture, and physical demands of desired activities all are critical to the design of a fitness and healing program. Effective therapists will also incorporate neurological or nervous system facilitation.

During the early phase of injury recovery, patients are educated in strategies to reduce inflammation and pain. Gentle movement is also introduced as the body tends to restrict motion during the healing phase. This restriction may help to stabilize a joint, for example, but can also lead to stiffness, further restriction and pain. Therapists are well trained in introducing just the right amount of movement.

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The Nuances

Isn't all exercise the same? The answer is a definite and resounding "no." An individual's exercise prescription, based on the individual's current level of fitness, injury, and phase of healing and functional goals, should be modified to reflect these considerations. Resistance training requires careful consideration of parameters such as sets, repetitions, load, velocity, and rest periods to maximize training effectiveness. Every patient will train differently — even emphasize different program aspects (strength, power, or endurance) for different muscle groups.

For example:

Strength — Resistance training for strength might focus training on 80 to 100 percent of a defined load, for three sets of eight to 12 repetitions, with slow and controlled speed.

Power — Training for power might emphasize 85 to 100 percent of a defined load, for three to six sets of six repetitions, but at a very fast speed.

Endurance — Endurance resistance training might emphasize 30 to 80 percent of a defined load, for four to seven sets of 10 to 25 repetitions.

In addition, therapists typically extend a clinic program to include a comprehensive home program, and often utilize training options the patient has access to at country clubs and gyms or fitness centers. Knowledge of community group exercise programs helps to connect patients to resources in the community. Some therapists have also received advanced training and certification for specialization in certain clinical areas, such as orthopedics, hands, or balance. A good therapist will know when to refer patients who may be better served by another therapist, just as physicians may refer patients to specialists.

Eisenhower Medical Center's Rehabilitation Department features a network of professionals with expertise unmatched by any other provider and available at four locations in the Coachella Valley. Although a physician referral is required, services are covered by most insurance providers. For more information, **please visit rehab.emc.org or call 760-773-2033.**

EISENHOWER OUTPATIENT THERAPY 760-773-2033

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Dolores Hope Outpatient Care Center
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Harry and Diane Rinker Building

Eisenhower Medical Center
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La Quinta

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