



Non-Traditional Physical Therapist Role...Maybe Not Anymore?

Jamie Bockhop PT, LAT, FAFS, OCS

I've often been asked within the community - where have you been or what are you doing? In January 2018, I made the transition to working full-time, on-site, with multiple employers in the area through New Life For Work. During these conversations, I try to explain the various roles I perform as a New Life For Work Musculoskeletal Specialist. However, I observe facial expressions telling me many people view this as non-traditional and maybe not fully understanding the variety of roles a Physical Therapist (PT) can serve.

This may be an optimal opportunity to share some background and observations I've had. First, the sites I visit are pro-active and forward-thinking facilities to offer the benefit of having a PT onsite. Think about your personal working history... how many places offered the benefit of talking to and/or seeing a PT onsite? The opportunity to address musculoskeletal concerns immediately at onset; what can I do to help myself? How long has it taken you to get a medical appointment and then actually address the problem beyond medications? How often have you heard something along the lines of: "In the future you should..." or "Have you done this instead?" How expensive are the direct costs (insurance, deductibles, co-pay, co-insurance) of your health care experiences? How much time (indirect costs) and re-arranging of your personal schedules is needed to address your aches and soreness? Not all employers offer this benefit or resource for employees. The trend is shifting to be more common, but companies already offering this benefit deserve recognition for their concern and positive efforts shown for employees.

What do I do onsite? I'm there to manage the musculoskeletal health of the employees. An employee reports, "My back is tight or sore - what can I do?" My

shoulder is sore (maybe it was something that happened at home versus work) - what can I do? I will screen the employees of their aches and discomfort. I use my education and training to first screen "red flags" of referral needs. For example, if something is presenting as a potential fracture or maybe non-musculoskeletal (I'm referring this person to an MD). Otherwise, a large portion of what I do is counseling and helping empower employees to self-manage. Often, it's something as simple as, "Should I use ice or heat? How do I stretch this? How do I lift correctly? Am I doing this the best way?" Someone may say, "I have interest of joining the softball league this summer - can you help or offer anything to help me get ready for this?" My services encompass physical health, ergonomics, fitness, and wellbeing. This could include injury prevention, treatment, therapy, training, human performance, functional job analysis, functional job descriptions, pre-work screens, employee enhancement, and teamwork.

I've been able to meet many employees with diverse backgrounds from all the sites and have learned a great deal from them. The old saying of, "walk a mile in his/her shoes first". I have heard from new employees or prospective employees how long it's been since they've had a physical exam or basic medical consultations due to financial limitations. I have heard many problems an employee purposely put off in the past or even say, "I'm trying my best to just ignore it" due to various restraints. I have heard frequently of sacrifices many are doing in this world to make sure a child or a loved one is getting the care they need. In many ways - I'm seeing that person's true colors and witnessing the sacrifices they are willing to make for another person. I'm learning valuable life lessons of what's happening in our world



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

The Value of a PT in an Industrial Setting

Is an X-ray or MRI Necessary?

Clinic and Community Events

Winter Activity Safety Tips

ENTER TO WIN:

Find the words "expecting to hurt" inside this issue and enter the drawing 2 ways.

Enter online at Newlifept.com
under our [Blog page](#) or
Call (608) 742-9356 for your chance to
win a Free Pizza Ranch Gift Card!

Drawing will be held on Monday,
January 27th, 2020.

just by listening and trying to put myself in that person's shoes. I'm sometimes asked, in the community, if I find the industrial setting to be as rewarding or fulfilling for me. When you know you've made a difference or are helping so many people in various ways then yes, I would definitely say I'm finding reward and fulfillment.

I didn't know how to respond at first to an employee's comment, "I continued my employment at this place because of you".

That was a powerful comment that will put a pause in your step. I was honored to receive such a compliment. Then I thought about it and decided I needed to listen even deeper. This employee was obviously satisfied with the help they received, but what was happening beyond this. They indicated before working with me they were heading down the path of no longer participating in anything outside of work and isolating themselves at work. Basically, they just went to work (did only what was necessary) and came home to sit and do nothing (expecting to hurt if they did anything else). Their social life and ambition was spiraling down. Due to financial and insurance concerns – they avoided getting any help for their aches and discomfort. Then, the benefit of a PT onsite became available. They were hesitant and even resistant at first (telling me later they were just “mad” at the world). After multiple conversations and encouragement – they elected to give it a try (it was a free benefit after all). In only a couple visits they saw vast improvements and the positive momentum took off after that. “I can help myself”. Today, this person’s engagement has been a 180 degree turn. They help new hires; they offer their insights constructively and in their words, “paying it forward”. I’ve heard from supervisors and others, “that’s a completely different employee”. They enjoy being at work and it’s infectious in a good way. What I really enjoy is when I see this person on the floor, their comments aren’t about everything that hurts – it’s about all the fun things they are doing or plan to do outside of work. That’s a person empowered to “live again”!

Is working at industrial sites rewarding and fulfilling? Absolutely!! Is an industrial role non-traditional for a PT? 20-30 years ago (definitely)... today (not sure I would consider it non-traditional anymore).

If this article presents further questions or thoughts about yourself or someone you know. I would encourage you to visit Newlifept.com website for more descriptions and benefits of industrial coverages provided through New Life. 🌱

Jamie has been a physical therapist at New Life PT since 2009. He enjoys the variety that comes with serving multiple local communities and its members through onsite industrial therapy. Jamie specializes in Orthopedics (Orthopedic Clinical Specialist) and Industrial Therapy.

What Do You Mean, My X-Ray or MRI Doesn't Tell Me The Cause of My Pain?

Mary Rose Strickland PT, DPT, OCS

There has been a plethora of research that has come out in recent years that shows that images (xrays or MRIs) in many cases do not identify the source of symptoms. Often times, these images show normal, age-related changes. Degeneration, spurs, arthritis are for the inside of our body the same that wrinkles and gray hair are for the outside. This has led to a lot of confusion and further questions. “Then why even bother with imaging?” and “how are you going to treat me, if you don’t have a picture?” and most importantly: “so WHY do I hurt?”. To understand this all, let’s start with research (don’t just take my word for it...)

A study from the American Journal of Neuroradiology in 2015 shows that by the ages below, ASYMPTOMATIC individuals (meaning people without pain or symptoms) had the following pathologies found on their imaging:

IMAGING FINDING	30 YEARS OLD	40 YEARS OLD	50 YEARS OLD	60 YEARS OLD	70 YEARS OLD
DISK DEGENERATION	52%	68%	80%	88%	93%
DISK BULGE	40%	50%	60%	69%	77%
DISK PROTRUSION	31%	33%	36%	38%	40%

Additional studies have shown the following based on body region:

- 85% of adults with NO knee pain have arthritis shown on x-ray.
- Degenerative changes in the neck are extremely common with up to 98% of healthy adults showing some degenerative changes in their cervical discs.
- 50% of people 60 years and older with NO shoulder pain had rotator cuff tears on MRI that they did not even know about.
- Up to 1/3 of people have a heel spur and NO pain or plantar fasciitis.

“So what is the point of an image?”

Imaging can be useful to rule out more serious pathology – including a broken bone, extreme interruption to nerves from the spine, tumors/cancer, potential indication of other systemic joint disease, etc. It does not tell us how to treat a condition.

There are clinical indicators that help determine when an image is needed up front. For a majority of musculoskeletal disorders, imaging is not needed to determine course of treatment. It is only required if the course of treatment will change based on result of the image. Often times, physical therapy is the most appropriate first step in care. If after 6-8 weeks of conservative treatment you are not seeing results, then an image may be indicated at that time.

“How are you going to treat me without an image?”

We have clinical tests that we can group together and provide us with the most accurate (although not perfect) information to classify and identify how we should go about treatment. Once more serious pathologies are ruled out, we determine what classification you fall in to and then are able to treat you based on that information; no image needed!

“Why Do I Hurt?”

At this point you have learned that a picture does not often tell us why you hurt, due to the fact that findings that seem “abnormal” may be completely normal after all. Or they may be from previous injuries or issues we have had in years’ past. We are a dynamic system with many tissue structures that move in three dimensions at many different joints. Often times if we have pain, it is caused by an imbalance in that system. For example, your foot pain while walking may be the result of your hip not extending well and putting added stress on your foot. Walking is a dynamic activity, involving multiple joints. A picture of just the foot in standing (static – no movement) position does not give us the information we need. Also, more chronic pain can be caused by heightened sensitivity of the nervous system. Think of your motion-detected flood light that is supposed to turn on when someone walks by and instead it turns on when a leaf blows by because it is too sensitive. This hypersensitivity is another example of a cause of your pain that does not show up on an image.

Cost Implications

Based on your specific region, the facility you go to, and the specific body region, the average x-ray can cost up to \$800. MRI on average costs \$3,000. A full course of physical therapy will cost \$2,000 from the average hospital, and often much less (around \$1200) from a local private practice.

Bottom Line

See your physical therapist first. They can help determine if an image is needed or not. They will serve as a great consult for your ache, pain or injury and/or refer you to more formal physical therapy if that is appropriate. Research shows that those who choose PT first have better outcomes and lower cost of care. Now you can understand why... it is about getting the right care at the right cost at the right time! 🌱



Remember to check out www.NewLifePT.com/workshop for information about our upcoming Free Workshops at one of our locations near you!

CLINIC HAPPENINGS



Drawing Winner:

Justina won our drawing last month for a convenient New Life PT Hot/Cold Pack. Congratulations Justina!



We celebrated the anticipation of baby Mikulas with a baby shower and, of course, cake. Pictured here is New Life’s expectant Sydney.



The 2019 New Life PT Christmas party was at Asgard Axe Throwing in the Dells. If you have not gone, it is a must try. It was a new experience for all of us that turned out to be lots of fun! Who knew we were all right handed?! We participated in a tournament among ourselves and ended up with a winning team pictured here with their Asgard t-shirts as their prize.



New Life PT, Jordan Hove and about ten K-8th graders completed an active and fun Sports Performance class together at the Civic Center in Baraboo. They met for ten classes and had a great time moving around with Jordan leading them through a daily dynamic warm up to aid in improved athletic performance and help reduce injury risks. They had a daily theme (strength, power, agility/landing, speed, hand-eye coordination), and finished with some fun/active games. The goal of the course was to get kids moving, having fun, enjoying activity and aid in optimizing movement and improve their athletic development.



Mark your calendar, enjoy good food, save yourself the work and help donate to good causes! The Baraboo Kiwanis pancake breakfast

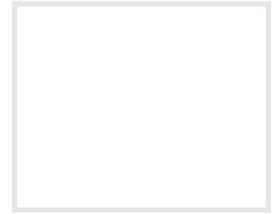
set for **Sunday, February 9th** at the **High School in Baraboo**. New Life PT, Jordan will be selling tickets in the near future for anyone that would like to stop in to the Baraboo clinic and buy them.

SUCCESS HELPING PEOPLE RECLAIM THEIR ACTIVE LIFE

Joshua had difficulty with his feet and balance when coming to New Life Physical Therapy. This is what he says of his experience at New Life. “I was referred to physical therapy by my podiatrist due to some out-toeing and unbalance. I came to New Life with no idea what to expect. I first met with Kris who was instantly analyzing my posture, walk and other physical characteristics. She was caring and professional and provided me with the purpose of the treatment, the process and what to expect in the end. She worked with Kyle who I also saw for appointments. Kyle is extremely knowledgeable and has a wonderful demeanor. He demonstrated exercises clearly and encouraged me to overcome physical barriers. Both Kyle and Kris are examples of how all healthcare providers should be.” - Joshua



2639 New Pinery Road, Suite 2
Portage, WI 53901
Phone: 608.742.9356



Enter our
drawing for
a **Free Pizza
Ranch Gift
Card!**

Information
inside.

DID YOU KNOW?

You do not have to waste time and money on unnecessary doctor visits and tests.

You are able to see our physical therapists directly with no referral required!

You do not have to miss out on doing the things you want, need, or love to do because of pain or limitations in physical performance.

New Life Physical Therapy can help you reclaim your active life with our experienced and caring specialists.

**TRY
PHYSICAL
THERAPY
FIRST**

SAFETY TIPS FOR WINTER OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

For many people, freezing temperatures and fresh snow in winter means having fun with your family and friends outdoors. Have a great time and enjoy it, but make sure to keep these things in mind to do your best to avoid injuries to yourself and others.

- Protective gear is a must. Always wear the protective gear appropriate for your activity. Take a look to be sure it is all in good condition.
- Ease into it. Warm up with light activity or stretches because cold muscles, tendons and ligaments are more prone to injury.
- Know your limits. Make a wise choice and match your skill level with the activity you choose. Then stay within your abilities when doing that activity.
- Follow the safety rules. Stay within the marked boundaries and learn how to do the activity safely. Feet first while seated sledding etc.
- Stop when you are fatigued as accidents are more likely to happen when you are tired.
- Stay hydrated and wear layers. Base layers that breathe help keep you dry because damp layers from sweat can lower body temperature.
- Make sure your path is clear of obstacles to lower your risk of collision with anyone or anything.



2639 New Pinery Road,
Suite 2, Portage ,
WI 53901
608.742.9356



840 State Road 136,
Suite 3, Baraboo,
WI53913
608.356.2334