

Everything You Need To Know About Physical Therapy

**THE 35 MOST  
FREQUENTLY  
ASKED  
QUESTIONS OF  
PHYSICAL  
THERAPY**

...Helpful, Whether You're A "Beginner Or A Seasoned Pro!"

Written By One Of The US' Leading Physical Therapists –

**Ryan Beck**

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## About The Author



**Ryan Beck, DPT** is the director of Oregon Spine and Physical Therapy. He is also a consultant for local companies and health facilities to help people live pain free and make better decisions about their health care. He has lectured at health conferences and in physician offices to patients about their muscle and joint concerns, that affect their day to day life, and even stop them from doing the things they love most.

He puts forth an extensive effort to develop his clinical staff to ensure their skills stay current and help people recover quickly. This allows physical therapy to be the smart first choice for injuries. He also has a passion for developing a love for people and instilling principles of empathy and concern for others to his staff.

Education is paramount. He is one of 400+ clinicians to complete a post graduate residency for the diagnosis of muscle and joint problems. Although striving to be one of the best physical therapists has been a pinnacle goal, it is not as important as caring for people.

More than anything, he enjoys time with his wife and two sons. Ryan and his family are usually out on their bikes, hiking, playing basketball or wrestling on the living room floor. The key to Ryan's life is in keeping his family connected with good wholesome principles coupled with plenty of valuable time spent together.

**In this Special Report** written to help “lift the lid on Physical Therapy,” I share with you 35 very common questions, provide answers, offer clarity and debunk myths (...and the skepticism) that many people have and hold concerning the Physical Therapy industry.

This Special Report is for health conscious men and women, serious about their health. Particularly, those who are determined enough to do something about poor health and want to do whatever it takes to find a return to better health.

It is compiled from years of taking concerning questions left on my patient message board, inquisitive email replies, questions from people who walk into our PT clinic in person, those who call in on the phone and even “live chat” their queries to us... and they all have one thing in common:

They come from men and women who value their health enough to go out of their way and make a simple inquiry about what they can do about the first signs of poor health, and more, ASK exactly how Physical Therapy can help them achieve their goal of returning to great health.

The questions, and the honest answers which follow, are in no particular order. And I'll use all the questions as the context for my response about what PT is, and what we can do (for you) here at Oregon Spine and Physical Therapy...

And it's the latter that is important for you to understand...because very few, if any, Physical Therapy clinics in Oregon, offer the PT service, in the standout way that we do.

# Physical Therapy -

## Your 35 FAQ's Answered

### Q1. What actually is Physical Therapy (PT)?

**Ryan:** Physical Therapy is a proven strategy for first easing the worries and concerns of people suffering from aches, pain and stiffness, then helping that person move freely again, bending further, stretching easier and living an active and healthy lifestyle in their 40's, 50's or 60's.

More, it lets that person live free from the worry that the same problem will come back to haunt them anytime soon.

### Q2. Do I get personal support if I need it?

**Ryan:** Yes. If you arrange to try physical therapy with us, you'll be given almost unrestricted access to your own physical therapist who will be on hand to take your call or reply to your emails, for as long as you need.

### Q3. Does physical therapy help someone like me?

**Ryan:** Here's a list of the types of people physical therapy helps:

- 1. People aged 35-64 who love to be active - Why?** Because men, women and couples "on-the-go" have lots of good reasons to get better fast.
- 2. People still working (and want to remain that way...) Especially sales people, managers, engineers, office workers, teachers, manual workers, nurses, health care workers, lawyers, even doctors...Why?** Because they need to move easily and be able to sit comfortably for long periods in order to perform well in their jobs.
- 3. People aged 55+ who are determined to remain independent - Why?** Because many people see the impact that physical ill health has taken up their parents.
- 4. Especially active and involved Grandparents - Why?** Grandparents who play games with their grandkids, help with schoolwork or like to walk with them to and from school, take them places or babysit them, often tell us that's why they felt the need to come and try physical therapy.
- 5. People who take their health very seriously - Why?** A lot of the people who visit us are very "pro-active" about their health. That means they read up on foods, vitamins, health topics, try to eat right, take vitamins other supplements such as cod liver oil - and do their best to stay out of the doctor's office and the hospital. The very same motivations to stay out of the doctor's office are the reasons "why" come to see a PT like me.

#### **Q4. What should I wear for physical therapy?**

**Ryan:** We will tell you all of that on the phone. But you never have to remove large chunks of clothing. To make your physical therapy experience as comfortable as possible please keep in mind the location of your injured body part.

For example if you have a lower back injury, shorts or sweat pants and a loose shirt would be ideal. Or if you're suffering a shoulder injury, a tank top or loose shirt would be great.

Your physical therapist will always aim to remove as little clothing as possible and we will never ask that you remove an item of clothing that may completely expose a large area of your body.

Occasionally patients will ask us if it would be easier or more convenient for us to provide treatment if an item can be removed completely. You are free to make this decision.

#### **Q5. How likely is it that physical therapy will be able to help me?**

**Ryan:** If your problem or concern is one of pain and or stiffness in the muscles or joints of the following area:

• **Back** • **Hip** • **Knee** • **Neck/Shoulder** • **Ankle** • **Foot/Ankle**

Then it's 99% likely that physical therapy will be able to help you out, and there are various ways we might do that.

#### **Q6. Can I talk to a physical therapist before I schedule just to confirm physical therapy is right for me?**

**Ryan:** Absolutely. Just call us using this number (541) 683-5139 or even email your questions to me using [rbeck@oregonspinept.com](mailto:rbeck@oregonspinept.com).

#### **Q7. Will you do anything at the first session to help my pain?**

**Ryan:** Yes. It's always my intention to start making progress on the pain and or stiffness you've got, as well as help ease your other psychological concerns and frustrations.

#### **Q8. Will I get any exercises or anything like that to take home with me?**

**Ryan:** Only if the time is right and I think you doing them is not going to make your pain worse. I'll give you as many hints or tips as possible that you can be using when you go back home that night.

### **Q9. What will happen if I don't choose to go and see a physical therapist?**

**Ryan:** Your current predicament will continue, and you'll run the risk of doing unforeseen and untold damage to the joints if they're not moved back into the correct position, or muscles made stronger.

A failure to adhere to the right recovery program post injury could increase the risk of early onset arthritis in joints. 9 days is an important mile stone – if pain and or stiffness isn't getting better at this point, it isn't going to go away on its own.

### **Q10. How long will it take for physical therapy to get me active and healthy again?**

**Ryan:** On average, from the last 15 years we've been doing this, and for most problems that involve joints and muscles that we see in our clinic, we've worked out a way to speed up the process and get it down to as little as 2-3 weeks to get a person feeling better and confident again.

### **Q11. "This only happened the other day", and I'm in a lot of pain. How long should I leave it before I come in and see a physical therapist for help?**

**Ryan:** ASAP. There will always be a number of things that we can do. Sometimes it's as simple as "Do this, but don't do that...".

And the first will be to tell you what NOT to do. So many people make fatal, miss informed mistakes when it comes to dealing with sudden pain. Every decision that you get wrong in the first few days will, very likely, add to the length of time it will take to get better.

### **Q12. Somebody mentioned a Chiropractor to me, what's the difference between a physical therapist and a Chiropractor?**

**Ryan:** To be brief, a physical therapist looks for a cure. And our aim is to help you so much that you will not need to constantly keep coming back to us. So a physical therapist will work you out a plan, to work on stopping the injury happening again.

We do very similar techniques as osteopaths and chiropractors (such as manipulation of your spine), but we do added things such as massage and stretching and believe that the combination of that, plus exercises and posture correction will first reduce your pain fast, and then help you manage your pain in the coming years to avoid the need for repetitive visits to see us.

Osteopaths and chiropractors are both fantastically effective at reducing back pain and many of the good ones will even refer their patients to a physical therapist for the things like massage and exercises that they sometimes don't do.

**Q13. I can't work this thing out. One minute I'm not bothered by it, then the next it can quite literally take my breath away. Just when I think it's getting better, it hits me again!...What if I come in and see you and it doesn't hurt at that time, will I be wasting my time?**

**Ryan:** No. Pain is not really what we do!...physical therapy is about finding what ever it is that is causing the thing to happen in the first place. And if your injury is now a few weeks old, two things are likely to be happening. The first is that the joints and muscles are locked stiff, or jammed in one place, so every time you get to a certain point they don't want to move and will give off a sharp pain.

Second, is that now you're likely to have inflexible and weak muscles. And the combination of that plus locked joints = long term problems.

**Q14. How quickly will I be seen?**

**Ryan:** Often within days. If you need an emergency appointment, please let us know on the phone or in your email and we can arrange for a physical therapist to work extra to help you, within 24 hours or less.

**Q15. Do you use "hands" (manual therapy)?**

**Ryan:** Yes. Everything from adjustments, massage, and stretching, to name just a few. The key is getting the diagnosis right, then selecting the right treatment.

**Q16. I'm not in any pain per se - I'm just experiencing lots of stiffness and tightness and worried that something's about to go "pop" (meaning I will be). Am I right to be considering physical therapy?**

**Ryan:** You are PERFECT for physical therapy (and us). Some people think that physical therapy is about ending pain - that's only ONE thing we do. But it isn't the BEST.

The aim is to stop you from ever getting to the point where you're in lots of pain by making you more supple, more flexible and your body stronger and able to withstand the amount of activity you want to do, no matter what your age.

**Q17. What's the difference between a good physical therapist and bad one?**

**Ryan:** Just three things:

- The amount of "care" taken (easy to spot).
- The "Hands On" techniques and skills being used.
- Ability to accurately diagnose an injury.

### **Q18. Can physical therapy help me if I have Arthritis?**

**Ryan:** Yes! But please understand it can't CURE it. But it can very easily help manage the symptoms it causes. Many people come to physical therapy aged 45+ and suffering with "wear and tear" (arthritis) inside their knee joints etc.

### **Q19. I have had "clicking", "clunking" and "cracking" noises happening in my joints for a few years now. And the pain is just starting to get worse. I'm 48. Is physical therapy for me?**

**Ryan:** Yes. You're an almost perfect candidate for physical therapy. This is a typical story. Most joint problems begin with warning signs like the "clicks and cracks" you've been hearing. And then a few years later comes the pain.

### **Q20. I'm in the early days of joint pain and stiffness. I've gotten to 50 without any problems but I'm now worried I'm next in line for joint troubles like the rest of my friends of a similar age. I'm really active and love to play sports, walk and swim. Can physical therapy help someone like me?**

**Ryan:** Yes. It's a simple case of strengthening your body to limit the impact of arthritis before it's too late. Physical therapy will give you hope, the confidence to go places (and do things) and WILL let you get active again quickly.

### **Q21. I'm a cyclist and I'm not in any pain with the outside of my knee when I rest, but it 'fires up' whenever I get back on my bike. Is that common and do I need physical therapy?**

**Ryan:** Yes and Yes. Most sports injuries settle down so that you can walk around and do simple everyday things without pain. But as soon as you step it up a level or two, if the problem is still there, it lets you know in the way of tightness, pain or swelling and stiffness.

### **Q22. Will physical therapy help me with my flexibility? I'm "stiff as a board" the few hours after I've been out on my bike and I know this is causing my achy lower back.**

**Ryan:** Yes. We'll walk you through a simple set of exercise routines you can do everyday to help eliminate this. Oh, and we'll fix your "achy back" too.

### **Q23. Is there anyone that physical therapy ISN'T right for?**

**Ryan:** Yes. Anyone who is expecting a miracle and hoping to be fixed in one visit. Rarely possible, particularly for injuries happening to men and women aged 40+.

What is right for EVERYONE is an Evaluation. We can evaluate any pain. If we can come to a diagnosis of your problem (coming from your muscles or joints), we can help. If not, we don't continue PT but help your doctor understand your problem better.

### **Q24. Is physical therapy expensive?**

**Ryan:** Not in my humble opinion. It comes down to what you value, I guess. Most people will spend more each month on a fresh cup of coffee, than the "cost" of physical therapy.

Compared to surgery, MRI's and ongoing pain, PT has been proven to be much more cost effective.

### **Q25. Do you have someone who specializes in \_\_\_X\_\_\_?**

**Ryan:** (X is usually any one of these following areas:)

- Back pain
- Sports injuries
- Neck/Shoulder Pain
- Muscle tension and tightness
  
- Knee pain
- Massages
- Spinal Adjustments
- Foot/Ankle Injuries

And the answer: Yes. We have someone who specializes in each of those areas.

### **Q26. What does physical therapy treatment actually entail?**

**Ryan:** Good PT is a 3 step process:

1. Diagnosis
2. Treatment
3. Prevention

Using a well established exam process leads to the correct diagnosis. The correct diagnosis leads to the selection of the right treatment for you.

Now we can understand what to do for prevention. We use movement and our hands to diagnosis and treat your problem.

### **Q27. Is physical therapy painful?**

**Ryan:** Not really. But it is true that physical therapy is a very physical experience and as such treatments can often be a little uncomfortable at times, but we will always aim to be as gentle as possible and cause the minimal discomfort we possibly can to get your problem solved as fast as we can.

Before we do any physical therapy techniques we will tell you exactly what is about to happen whether or not it is likely to hurt and for how long.

### **Q28. Will I get some things (tips) that I can be doing at home to help myself get better quicker?**

**Ryan:** Absolutely. The aim is to help you in every which way we can. You're only with us for 45-60 minutes, so, we aim to "arm" you with tools, hints and tips that you can use to make a difference that you will feel, very quickly, on your own.

### **Q29. Ryan, why then did my doctor tell me NOT to try physical therapy, just rest and take medications?**

**Ryan:** Most doctors are NOT trained to know injuries and the symptoms of physical injury well enough to understand when one can benefit from physical therapy. Shocking, but VERY true.

### **Q30. How long does the session last?**

**Ryan:** Reality is, it will take as long as you need to get the help you came looking for. Generally, a session lasts 45-60 minutes.

### **Q31. Will I be in any pain after the treatment i.e. the next day?**

**Ryan:** More often than not the pain stops as soon as we do, so you only have to tell us to stop and we will. If you feel worse the next day, we will re-evaluate and adjust accordingly. Pain is a side to physical therapy that is often unavoidable and most patients eventually concede that the pain is a nice sort of pain, one they know that is doing them some good and is often no worse than the pain that they are already in.

The discomfort usually reduces as treatment progresses and we always advise you on things like ice and heat to help reduce the soreness that might be caused by the treatment. If it's painful the next day, ice usually soothes it!

### **Q32. Do I need a referral from my Doctor?**

**Ryan:** Not to get started. Many insurance companies require a referral and others do not. Give us a call and we can check your benefits for you.

### **Q33. Can I bring a friend in to the treatment room with me?**

**Ryan:** Yes. No problem. You do not need to inform us of this decision in advance. If you are accompanied by a friend or family member then we will often ask if you would like them to join you in the room during treatment. Alternatively they can wait in reception if you would prefer.

### **Q34. How often will I need treatment?**

**Ryan:** That is always dependent upon the nature of your injury and how quickly you want the improvements.

Our aim is to return you to full fitness as quickly and as safely as possible. Your physical therapist will be in a better position to answer this following your initial consultation. Big Tip: Getting in early nearly always means less time to recover and less physical therapy sessions needed.

### **Q35. How long will it take for physical therapy to settle my pain?**

**Ryan:** As long as it takes you to call and schedule! If you had tooth pain, my best bet is that you'd call the very first day you noticed the pain - and you'd do it because you know that it's the best possible way to get rid of that tooth pain, fast.

So, to answer the question, it will take as long as it takes you to make an inquiry and then coming in to see us. Know this: it will happen much quicker than if you leave it to time or worse yet, chance it by taking painkillers or going to see the doctor!...

## **Conclusion**

So, there you have it: 35 Questions answered that take you behind the scenes of a real live Private Physical Therapy Practice. More, you've just read the most common concerns, questions and myths that surround the PT industry. I hope the answers have provided you with clarity, debunked any myths and put to bed any skepticism that may, or may not be stopping you from accessing a very valuable service – one that can quite literally change how active you are, and how healthy you look and feel - in your 40's, 50's, 60's and beyond.

I hope this is the beginning of a great, long-term relationship where myself and my colleagues from the Oregon Spine and Physical Therapy Team become the source of leading-edge health advice for you and make a real difference to your life.

### **You can contact me at:**

**info@oregonspinept.com -or- (541) 683-5139**

Dedicated to Getting you Moving and Active, like you Deserve,

#### **Ryan Beck**

Oregon's Leading PT

www.OregonSpinePT.com

## **Health Advice Disclaimer**

We make every effort to ensure that we accurately represent the injury advice and prognosis displayed throughout this Guide.

However, examples of injuries and their prognosis are based on typical representations of those injuries that we commonly see in our physical therapy clinic. The information given is not intended as representations of every individual's potential injury. As with any injury, each person's symptoms can vary widely and each person's recovery from injury can also vary depending upon background, genetics, previous medical history, application of exercises, posture, motivation to follow therapist advice and various other physical factors. It is impossible to give a 100% complete accurate diagnosis and prognosis without a thorough physical examination, and likewise the advice given for management of an injury cannot be deemed fully accurate in the absence of this examination from one of the Licensed PTs at Gordon Physical Therapy. We are able to offer you this service at a standard charge. Significant injury risk is possible if you do not follow due diligence and seek suitable professional advice about your injury. No guarantees of specific results are expressly made or implied in this report.