

## Physical Therapy Can Relieve Pain

*Ed. Note: The following story is a press release from the American Physical Therapy Association.*

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Now that Bextra, another Cox-2 inhibitor, has been pulled off the market due to cardiovascular risks and potentially serious skin reactions, patients may wish to consider the benefits of physical therapist intervention for pain relief from certain conditions, according to the American Physical Therapy Association (APTA).

"Many people are looking for alternatives to the sole use of medication to deal with painful conditions," said APTA President Ben F Massey, Jr, PT, MA. "Pain medication may help you get through periods of severe pain, but it won't always help you eliminate the underlying cause of some kinds of pain. For many individuals, it is the underlying causes like poor posture and alignment, weak and/or inflexible muscles, or tight joint structures that actually exacerbate the painful condition," Massey explained. "A physical therapist will perform a complete musculoskeletal examination and design an individualized treatment program to reduce pain and improve function."

There are many types of pain and inflammation that can be reduced by physical therapist intervention. For example, chronic pain in the back, shoulder, or knee, or pain associated with certain degenerative diseases such as osteoarthritis, can be reduced with the appropriate combination of medication and exercise. "The physical therapist, in collaboration with the patient and the patient's physician, can help the patient manage his or her health over the long term," explained Massey.

For pain of a "mechanical" origin such as back, shoulder, or knee pain, physical therapist intervention may include therapeutic exercise, manual therapy, and functional training. "The goal of the physical therapist is to reduce pain, improve your ability to perform daily activities, and help the individual return to doing the things he or she likes to do," said Massey. "It is also true that patients may unknowingly contribute to their own pain, such as by exercising improperly or with poor posture that physical therapists can identify and help to correct." Massey added, "Through the use of home programs designed to fit the individual's needs, the physical therapist can efficiently progress the individual's rehabilitation and teach the patient how to prevent a recurrence of the original condition."

For osteoarthritis, a degenerative disease of the cartilage and bone, physical therapist intervention may include exercises for strength, flexibility, range of motion, and devices designed to rest or support the joint such as orthotics or splints.

To find a physical therapist near you, please visit APTA's Web site at <http://www.apta.org/> and click on "Find A PT."

The American Physical Therapy Association (<http://www.apta.org/>) is a national professional organization representing 65,000 physical therapists, physical therapist assistants, and students. Its goal is to foster advancements in physical therapy practice, research, and education.

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