

Physiatry can get you back on your feet

By Gregory Burkard

You may not be familiar with the practice of physiatry, but from sports injuries to stroke, a physiatrist can play an important role in patient recovery. A physiatrist is also known as a physical medicine and rehabilitation physician. Physiatrists treat a variety of conditions related to the musculoskeletal system, which includes bones, joints, tendons, ligaments, and muscles. They also focus on the central and peripheral nervous system—the brain, spinal cord, and nerves.



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What does a physiatrist treat?

A physiatrist can provide care for many different problems, injuries, and disabilities to restore overall patient function and improve quality of life. Those conditions include the following:

- Traumatic brain injury
- Stroke
- Spinal cord injury
- Amputation

- Burns
- Cardiopulmonary deficits (such as heart attack, congestive heart failure, and COPD flare-ups)
- Musculoskeletal problems
- Sports injuries.

Physiatrists may specialize in areas such as pain medicine, sports medicine, spinal cord injury medicine, brain injury medicine, prosthetics and orthotics, or pediatric rehabilitation medicine, among others. As part of treatment, physiatrists may prescribe physical, occupational, or aquatic therapy, acupuncture, chiropractic care, dietitian services, neuropsychology or psychology care, and pain medications.

Should you see a physiatrist?

You might want to make an appointment with a physiatrist if:

- You have an injury or chronic condition that has resulted in pain or limited function pedicsandwellness.com.
- You have an illness that has limited your energy or ability to move easily
- You're recovering from a stroke or other problems related to nerve damage
- Life changes such as childbirth have caused new difficulties in your physical function
- You're thinking about surgery or you're recovering from a surgical procedure.

If any of these situations are affecting you or a loved one, a physiatrist will be able to guide treatment to restore function and improve your quality of life. Talk with your primary care provider about a referral to meet with a Barton physiatrist.

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