

Therapy for Your Child's Orthopedic Condition

Therapy is a treatment option for many orthopedic conditions. The two most common types are:

- Occupational therapy (OT)
- Physical therapy (PT)

Occupational Therapy (OT)

OT helps your child with activities of daily living. It can teach your child ways to take care of themselves. OT can help your child with dressing, bathing, grooming, and eating. Your child may need OT after an injury or surgery to the hand, wrist or elbow. OT can help them regain fine motion and strength. This can be helpful if your child is in a cast or is not able to move freely.

Physical Therapy (PT)

PT helps your child move their body. Your child may need PT after an injury or surgery. PT helps regain motion and strength. PT may also be used to help with pain or other symptoms that are due to muscle weakness or imbalance. PT can also help prevent future injuries.

Reasons for Therapy

Your child may need therapy if they have:

- Weakness or imbalance in muscles.
- Reduced movement in a joint.
- Pain.

Your child may have weakness, stiffness or pain after an injury or surgery. Many other conditions can also cause these symptoms. Even rapid growth in your child can cause problems. Therapy can help your child get stronger, move better, and even help to reduce pain.

How to Schedule Your Therapy Visit

Your child's provider can write an order or a "prescription" for therapy. You can choose a therapist who is covered by your insurance plan. You will also want to choose a clinic that is easy for you to get to as your child will have a lot of visits.

UW Health has therapists that specialize in treating children. You will be offered locations that have the type of specialty that meets your child's needs.

Length of Treatment

Your therapist will decide how often your child should be seen and how many visits your child needs. The length of treatment will depend on the reason your child is being seen. Your child will also get exercises to do at home between visits.

Making Therapy a Success

There are many things your child needs to do for therapy to be a success.

Attend all scheduled visits. This will allow the therapist to assess how your child is doing and provide new exercises.

Do exercises at home each day. Your child will not improve without putting in the work.

Follow the activity restrictions. If your child doesn't, they could cause the injury to get worse and prevent the therapy from helping.

Be patient. Symptoms will not improve right away. It can take weeks to months to work. The longer your child has had their condition, the longer it may take for symptoms to improve. Don't give up after only a few visits.

Ask questions if you are confused about the plan. Make sure you know what exercises your child should be doing at home and what limits they have.

If at first it did not succeed, try again.

Your child may have tried therapy in the past without success because:

- Your child didn't try it for long enough.
- Your child's diagnosis was incomplete.
- The exercises given to your child were not the right fit.

Seeing a new therapist and trying again will help.

Keep doing exercises even when no longer seeing a therapist. Your child may find that their symptoms return as they grow and their body changes. They also can lose strength over time if they stop working their muscles. Doing the exercises will help maintain the strength and motion your child achieved while in therapy. Your therapist should tell you what exercises to keep doing long term.