

Physical Therapists Help Kids Move, Too

By Northern Rehab Physical Therapy Specialists

Physical therapists are trained to work with patients of any age, and some PTs specialize in working with children with the goal to improve mobility and strength to help them participate in everyday activities.

Kids can have the same injuries as adults including sprained ankles, painful joints, and athletic injuries. A physical therapist helps children with these issues just like they can for adults. Children also may have injuries or issues particular to them such as Osgood-Schlatter's Disease or jumper's knee. Physical therapists are trained to treat these and other pediatric issues.

Some children are delayed in hitting their gross motor milestones, such as sitting up on their own, rolling, standing, walking, jumping and running. Other children show difficulty with coordination, for example, activities like hand motions to the "Wheels on the Bus" song, feeding themselves with utensils, moving awkwardly or slowly, or frequently tripping or bumping into things. Physical therapists help encourage development of gross motor skills and coordination to help get these kids get back on track.

Cerebral Palsy is a common motor disability in childhood. Symptoms can vary from slight uncoordinated movement to being unable to walk and needing assistance for almost all activities. There are several types of Cerebral Palsy, which affect the body in various ways. The most common type causes stiffness in the muscles, yet other types affect control of movements, balance or coordination. A physical therapist can help with all types or severity of Cerebral Palsy including treatment with stretching, exercise, bracing, and equipment like a wheelchair if needed.

Torticollis is a postural issue that usually becomes noticeable shortly after birth. Infants with Torticollis typically hold their heads tipped one direction and rotated towards the opposite side. This is caused by a tight neck muscle. Research has shown that early referral to a physical therapist is an effective treatment. The physical therapist shows the baby's caregivers ways to gently stretch the neck, and activities to encourage the baby to move his or her head into a more neutral position.

As movement experts, physical therapists are trained to deal with a variety of conditions and are the most qualified professionals to help you feel and move better, including working with your child's specific issues to improve mobility and strength to help children participate in everyday activities.

If you would like to improve your child's mobility or strength to better participate in everyday activities, or are seeking treatment for pediatric conditions such as Cerebral Palsy, Torticollis, developmental delays, or sports injuries, contact a physical therapist that specializes in pediatrics. PTs are the most qualified professionals to help you move better and allow you to stay healthy and return to higher-quality lives.