



THE PHYSICAL THERAPY SPECIALTY CENTER

a division of Primary Care Partners

NEWSLETTER

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GAIT AND BALANCE: WHY THEY MATTER MORE THAN YOU THINK

Gait and balance are essential components of safe, efficient movement, and play a key role in maintaining independence and preventing falls. Disruptions in walking patterns or balance can occur due to injury, surgery, neurological conditions, or age-related changes, often leading to decreased confidence and activity levels. This blog explores the importance of gait and balance, common causes of impairment, and how outpatient physical therapy can address these challenges through individualized treatment. Early intervention and targeted rehabilitation can improve mobility, reduce fall risk, and help patients return to daily activities with greater stability and confidence.

AROUND THE CLINIC:

You may have noticed that our waitlist and waiting periods to get in for new and current patients has remained similar over the past several months. This does not mean that we are not making a dent on our waitlist, in fact we are continuing to make progress reaching out to you when we have cancellations while new patients are added. There are a few things that can help us with our waitlist process and helping it function better that we would like to pass along to our patients:

1. If you are on the waitlist and we call you for an opening, and your schedule has changed or maybe you have improved enough to where you are comfortable waiting for your next scheduled appointment let us know that you would like to be removed from the waitlist.
2. If you find you are going to be unable to make it to your next scheduled appointment, please give us as much notice as possible so that we can use the waitlist to fill that opening with someone else in need, even leaving a voicemail over the weekend is helpful.
3. If you need to get in sooner, give our clinic a call same day. It's possible we can get you in if we've had a last-minute cancellation and we have not heard back from anyone on the wait list.
4. We are also now using text messages to alert patients of openings. The text message will state "Primary Care Partners has sent you a secure chat link". Click on that link to see our message for the opening!

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Spotlight Diagnosis of the Month

This section is to provide details about commonly seen diagnoses or injuries in our clinic and how Therapy may help.

Diagnosis: Total Hip Arthroplasty (THA)

What is it?

Total Hip Arthroplasty (THA), commonly called total hip replacement, is a surgical procedure in which the damaged parts of the hip joint are replaced with artificial components. These include:

- A metal or ceramic ball that replaces the femoral head
- A metal socket that replaces the acetabulum
- A plastic, ceramic, or metal liner that sits between the two pieces to allow smooth motion

The goal of THA is to relieve pain, restore mobility, and improve quality of life. The most common reasons for hip replacement include osteoarthritis (the most common cause, due to cartilage wear over time) and rheumatoid arthritis.

Other, less common, reasons include:

- Avascular necrosis – bone damage from loss of blood supply
- Post-traumatic arthritis – joint degeneration following an injury
- Severe fractures or congenital hip deformities

Understanding The Hip and why a THA may be necessary:

The hip is one of the largest and most important joints in the body. It's a ball-and-socket joint, where the head of the thigh bone (femur) fits into a deep cup in the pelvis (acetabulum). The surfaces of these bones are covered with smooth cartilage, which allows for easy, pain-free movement.

When the cartilage breaks down—whether from arthritis, injury, or long-term wear—the bones begin to rub together. This can cause pain, stiffness, and difficulty with simple tasks such as walking, climbing stairs, or getting in and out of a chair. When conservative treatments no longer provide relief, surgery may be recommended.

How Physical Therapy Can Help:

Physical therapy is essential to a successful hip replacement recovery. Therapy helps restore movement, rebuild strength, and reduce the risk of complications.

Your physical therapist will help guide you through each stage. The first 2 weeks usually including gentle movement exercises to prevent stiffness and blood clots and often walking training with an assistive device. Progression to more active strengthening for the hip and surrounding muscles occurs over time. For most people, a full recovery takes about 3–6 months, though this varies depending on age, health, and activity goals.

Key Takeaways:

- Total Hip Arthroplasty replaces damaged joint surfaces to relieve pain and restore movement.
- Physical therapy is critical to achieving optimal results—beginning within days after surgery.
- Patience and consistency with your home exercises and therapy sessions will directly influence your recovery speed and outcome.
- Lifelong movement habits can preserve your new hip for decades.

Please confirm your appointments electronically so we know you are coming, and please continue to call our office if you need to reschedule. We have a \$50 no show/less than 24 hour cancelation fee.

