



MOUNTAIN VALLEY VIEWS

NEWS FROM MOUNTAIN VALLEY PHYSICAL THERAPY

“Do you know what you’re doing?”

Learn about the credentials of our therapists

One question we hear a lot at MVPT is this: “how do you know what you’re doing?” The question is a valid one. Physical therapy as a profession has undergone extensive advances in the past 15-20 years as has the education one receives before earning the PT license. Since 2000, physical therapy programs began transitioning to a doctorate-level curriculum. Now there are over 200 programs in the United States that offer a DPT program (Doctor of Physical Therapy). Prior to this, physical therapy programs were at a master’s level, and a bachelor’s level before that.

After earning an undergraduate degree, completing the necessary prerequisite courses, receiving a number of hours of exposure in the field, and take the GRE, PT students may apply to a DPT program. The program lasts 3 years (8 semesters) and the curriculum covers foundational sciences (anatomy, physiology, neuroscience, pathology, pharmacology, radiology, medical screening), behavioral sciences (communication, psycho-social, ethics, law, business and management, clinical reasoning, research) clinical sciences and physical therapist practice (patient management, prevention, wellness, health promotion, social responsibility and advocacy, and core values). In addition to

all of this, students are required to have several internships in various settings where they are closely supervised by a licensed physical therapist in order to gain additional clinical and patient management skills.

After graduating with a DPT degree, students sit for a national licensure exam before they can begin treating as a physical therapist. While there is only one licensure exam, each physical therapist is certified to treat in his/her specific state. Each state has slight variations to the Physical Therapy Practice Act, which dictates how we can treat patients.

Completing physical therapy school is a strenuous and stressful process. But, all MVPT therapists agree that they chose this profession because they care about people and want to bring the best possible education and training to their patients. That’s what pushes them to keep learning through their careers.

Feature article taken from the MVPT blog: Form and Function. For a weekly blog post written by MVPT Therapist Karen Talkington, visit the blog at: <http://mountainvalleypt.wordpress.com>.

Fall 2011

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Hours of operation

Regular Hours:
Monday - Thursday:
7:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.
Friday:
7:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

How MVPT employees fit exercise in their busy lives

The MVPT crew is a fit one! Many of our patients know how busy our employees are and often ask what kind of activities we do to stay in shape. We want to share some of our tips in hope of inspiring others to keep active and healthy.

Lycia: I coach both of my kids' soccer teams, so multiple practices and games every week equals lots of running! Playing sports with your kids is a great way to get exercise and family time all at once.

Mary: I always try to do my patient's exercises with them throughout the work day. Then on the weekend I am always on the lookout for adventure time, whether it is hiking, biking, skiing or kayaking. Walking/running my dog is great exercise too!

Gina: Now that I am pregnant, I do water aerobics classes and prenatal yoga. Usually my routine would center around weight lifting 3x/week plus outdoor activities whenever possible. I do my best with simple things too, like taking stairs instead of the elevator and parking a bit further away.

Morgan: My boyfriend and I have been going to the gym in the evenings together. Having a workout partner makes it a lot easier—it holds you accountable.

Kate: I make it a point to walk to the grocery store. It's good for exercise and preventing buying too much! I also enjoy taking walks with my mom around the park.

Ellen: I have a treadmill and weights at home which I use, plus I run outside when the weather and my schedule allow for it. We also have a pool, so I swim a lot during the summer months.

Karen: I try making every moment count. I use everyday activities like unloading the dishwasher and doing laundry as an opportunity to do squats, and filling the car with gas or brushing my teeth for working on balance and stability.

Tami: On top of massage being exercise in itself, I utilize my elliptical trainer at home. I also enjoy taking walks with my dog Grace.

Jennifer: I head to the gym about 3 times a week, and then do my PT exercises once the kids go to bed. The best part of my week is our weekend family adventures, which include bike rides, hiking and lots of skiing.

Ryan: In addition to taking the stairs most of the time, I do an early morning crossfit workout 2 to 3 times per week as well as regular family adventures, like going on a cattle drive!



We love sharing good reviews with our patients. Here is a recent testimonial we received:

From Facebook...

Wonderful professionals and excellent office team. I am light years better after my spinal fracture fun. Thanks Mountain Valley PT!
— Dafna J.

Have you had a great experience at Mountain Valley? We'd love to hear about it! Send your "fan mail" to lycia@mountainvalleypt.com or post to our Facebook page.

We keep lots of information on our Facebook page, too. Check it out and become a fan!

Get your stuff from us!

Did you know that MVPT stocks a great deal of therapy supplies for purchase? Things like exercise balls, ice packs, Biofreeze, foam rollers and shoulder pulleys are available for purchase at our clinic. We never mark up these supplies—we sell them to patients for the same price we pay. We can also order any other equipment, braces, etc. that you might need which we do not keep in stock.

Is the pain I feel Sciatica?

As orthopedic physical therapists, we hear a tremendous number of patients report symptoms which seem to originate in the low back or buttock region, which then go down the hip and leg, sometimes as far down as the foot. Sometimes the symptoms include back pain, and sometimes there are no back symptoms whatsoever. What these patients are experiencing is sciatica, and may include pain, tingling, numbness and even muscular weakness. Studies report widely varying estimates of how common sciatica is, with the percentage of people who experience sciatica at some time during their life ranging from 12–43%, depending on the study. Any way you look at it, sciatica is common and quite often debilitating.

The sciatic nerve is the longest nerve in the body, extending from its origin at the nerve roots in the low back, through the hips and buttocks and all the way down the back of the leg and into the foot. It is responsible for many of the muscle movements of the legs and feet, as well as sensation in these areas. Something important to realize and often misunderstood is that sciatica is a set of symptoms, not a cause or diagnosis in itself. This point becomes especially important with regard to treatment, because figuring out the underlying source of the sciatic symptoms is the key to successful treatment.

Sciatica has several potential sources, however in any case involves irritation of either the nerve roots in the low back (lumbosacral spine) or an irritation of the sciatic nerve

itself. Conditions which can cause sciatic symptoms include:

■ **Lumbar disc herniation/protrusion.** This is the most common reason for sciatic symptoms, and has been implicated in up to 90% of cases. This can happen when a vertebral disc, which is the normal cushion for the spine between the



vertebrae, weakens or even ruptures, causing the disc to push out into areas occupied by the nerves of the spine.

■ **Lumbar spinal stenosis.** Spinal stenosis is a narrowing of one or more of the nerve canals in your spine, usually due to arthritic changes. This causes compression and irritation of the nerve roots, often leading to sciatic symptoms.

■ **Spondylolisthesis.** This condition occurs when one vertebra actually moves forward on another, causing a physical irritation or compression of the nerve root by the vertebra itself. It is commonly the result of a small fracture of the vertebra and often found along with

a degenerative disc; a combination which will likely cause sciatica to occur.

■ **Piriformis syndrome.** The piriformis muscle is a deep gluteal/hip muscle which in most people lies directly on top of the sciatic nerve. Piriformis syndrome occurs when this muscle becomes tight or goes into spasms, which causes direct physical pressure to the sciatic nerve. Prolonged sitting, sports injuries and falls can contribute to piriformis syndrome. We see this syndrome more frequently as well when there is weakness in the hip area and compensation is occurring.

■ **Spinal tumors.** Spinal tumors are clearly very rare compared to the above mentioned causes of sciatica, however can be a cause nonetheless. Tumors can occur within and around all of the internal structures of the spine, including the spinal cord itself. Due to the limited space in the area, a tumor can compress the cord or the nerve roots, causing the hip and leg symptoms to occur.

As physical therapists, we are trained to perform various tests and procedures to help guide a diagnosis of the underlying cause of a patient's sciatica symptoms, which will in turn guide our treatment. The good news is that the outcome for sciatica is favorable, with most patients getting relief from just a few treatments. Although full resolution can take longer in some cases, your therapist is able to address both the acute pain you may have, as well as designing a long-term, individualized home program to prevent further flare-ups in the future.

*Stats taken from NHS Evidence Clinical Knowledge Summaries at <http://www.cks.nhs.uk/home>.



MOUNTAIN VALLEY
PHYSICAL THERAPY

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Check out the new

MVPT Website!

www.mountainvalleypt.com

Want to know more about our therapists?
The latest deal on massage? Need to know if
we accept your insurance?

These answers (and many more!) can be found on the newly-revised MVPT website. We redesigned and updated everything.

You'll find everything you need to know about the clinic, our staff and procedures. And, there are direct links to our Facebook page and MVPT Blog: "Form and Function."

And for those of you who are tech savvy, you can use your smart phone on the QR (quick response) codes to go straight to our website and Facebook pages.



Holiday Hours

Thanksgiving

MVPT will be closed on Thursday, Nov. 24 and Friday, Nov. 25 in observance of Thanksgiving.

Christmas

Though some staff will take a day or two off around the Christmas/Hanukkah holidays, there are no days the office will be closed. Please check with your therapist or with the front desk with any questions.

New Year's

MVPT will be closed on Monday, Jan. 2 in observance of New Year's Day.