

DON'T MISS YOUR SHOT AT OPTIMAL HEALTH



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CHOOSE PHYSICAL THERAPY AND DISCOVER PAIN RELIEF

Where do you feel it most? Your sore neck, the nagging back pain, or maybe it's those aching shoulders that keep you on the sideline. You might have even just reached up to massage them, hoping to relieve some of your pain. Like many people, you may be choosing to ignore these aches and pains, hoping to avoid time-consuming and costly medical appointments and procedures. Ignoring your pain does not solve the problem. There must be a better way. A less expensive, faster way to reduce your pain and heal your injuries?

Your physical therapist is always your partner when it comes to helping you overcome pain or injury, and putting you on the road to health and wellness! With them as your partner, you can be prepared for your next big adventure.

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MAIN ARTICLE

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MAKE PHYSICAL THERAPY YOUR FIRST LINE OF DEFENSE

Musculoskeletal issues stemming from the neck, shoulders, and back are extremely common with approximately [1.71 billion](#) people worldwide suffering with a musculoskeletal injury. But treatment for these issues often comes with significant downsides, such as:

- Long wait times for physician appointments, insurance referrals, and diagnostic testing, all of which prolong your pain as you wait
- Dependency on pain medications and opioids to manage pain while waiting for specialist appointments and diagnostic testing
- Additional costs of diagnostic imaging such as x-rays or MRIs
- Time off from work to coordinate specialist appointments
- Expensive and invasive surgical procedures before trying conservative treatment
- Prolonged recovery times

Up to [70% of U.S. adults](#) will experience neck pain that interferes with their daily activities during their lifetime—and almost 70% of people who report shoulder pain experience it throughout their entire lives. Choosing physical therapy before seeking this more extensive medical care can help relieve pain and restore mobility while saving you valuable time, money, and hassle.

HOW PHYSICAL THERAPY CAN HELP

What should you expect during physical therapy? To learn a lot! What your care will include, how quickly it will progress, and when your care will conclude are dependent on each patient. No two patients are the same, no two injuries are the same, and each patient’s care plan is unique to them. Generally speaking, the typical length of care when attending physical therapy is approximately 8 weeks. During that time, your care will include four basic stages, which are outlined below.



Musculoskeletal:
What does it mean?

Musculoskeletal (mus·cu·lo·skel·e·tal) refers to the muscles, bones, tendons, ligaments, joints, and cartilage of the body.



STAGES OF PHYSICAL THERAPY CARE

1 Recovery

The goal of the recovery stage is to recuperate and allow your body to begin healing. Based on the severity of the injury, this can be the longest stage. Depending on the nature of your injury or surgery, the intention of this phase is to allow your body the time it needs to heal prior to initiating restorative care.

2 Repair

Once healing is complete, the repair stage begins with a focus on recovering mobility and movement. By gently easing your body back to pre-injury function, you can be sure to stay on track with the anticipated recovery timeline your physical therapist has provided you.

3 Strength

As motion is returned, the strengthening stage is crucial. Injury can recur without the necessary strength to support your normal range of motion. Following your physical therapist’s instructions – especially when it comes to your home exercise program – can help you achieve your rehabilitation goals.

4 Function

With pain resolved and motion and strength returned the final step toward discharge is restoring function. To reduce re-injury, achieving higher levels of movements and tasks is important. This ensures that the actions you perform frequently are not beyond your level of safety.

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Personalized Programs

After conducting a thorough evaluation of your medical history, injury, symptoms, and daily activities, your physical therapist will identify the root cause of your pain and determine the appropriate steps for treatment. With your feedback, they will create a customized physical therapy care plan that will outline each step of your rehabilitation process.

Strength & Flexibility

Exercise is a common option used to treat persistent pain, and it's proven to decrease inflammation, increase mobility, mobilize nervous tissue, and decrease overall pain. Taking a comprehensive look at your current health, pain levels, and ability, your physical therapist will be able to prescribe the best stretches and exercises that specifically target and mitigate your pain for short-term and long-term relief.



Manual Therapy

Staying up to date on the latest industry innovations and best practices, physical therapists can use hands-on [manual therapy](#) and [joint mobilization techniques](#), [dry needling](#), and other strategies to ease pain, reduce swelling, and encourage healthy movement.

Discharge Plan to Maintain Wellness

The final piece of your care is your [discharge plan](#). All the hard work you've put into your rehabilitation has brought you to your discharge. Just like any exercise program, when you stop your home exercise plan, you risk a decrease in strength and function. So, like your physical therapist tells you, to maintain the best outcomes for your injury, keep up those exercises!

Your physical therapy care plan is a roadmap from your first appointment to your discharge appointment, giving you the tools you need to achieve your rehab goals and maintain your condition in the weeks and months ahead.

The Pay-Off of Choosing Physical Therapy

Patients who chose physical therapy as their first line of treatment:



72%
saw lower costs within the first year of physical therapy



89%
had lower probability of needing an opioid prescription



66%
had a lower chance of needing medical imaging



55%
were less likely to need surgery

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What If I Need Other Medical Services?

It can be difficult to understand whether your pain or injury requires the expertise of a specialist. We can help with that, too. Your physical therapist has the advanced training needed to screen your pain. With your health as the #1 priority, they will help explain what their findings reveal and will do so in a way that you understand completely.

If your condition requires further medical attention, they'll refer you to a trusted specialist. But their work doesn't stop there. They'll continue to coordinate with your specialist to keep up to date on your condition. Based on your progress, if rehabilitation is needed at a later time, they will be ready and waiting for you, working with your full healthcare team to ensure you get the best outcomes possible.

FIND RELIEF AND KNOWLEDGE WITH YOUR PHYSICAL THERAPIST

When you choose physical therapy, you can experience pain relief, gain an understanding of your unique injury diagnosis, and find a partner in health for the years ahead. With physical therapy, you'll experience a true partnership. A licensed medical professional *that works with you* to create a customized recovery plan for long-lasting relief. We've listed the many benefits of choosing physical therapy—now it's time to take action so you can experience the value it can bring to your life. [Schedule your evaluation](#) at Bay State Physical Therapy today!



Where You Receive Care is Your Choice

Choose Bay State Physical Therapy

You have the right to go where you want for your services.
Tell your doctor you choose Bay State Physical Therapy!

When You Choose Bay State Physical Therapy, You Choose:



CONVENIENCE
Convenient locations close to where you live, work, and play



WARM & WELCOMING
Warm, welcoming clinics and high-quality hands-on care



GREAT PATIENT EXPERIENCES
Industry leading 'world-class' patient satisfaction scores

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SEASONAL TIPS

BREAK FREE FROM HEADACHE PAIN

Over [45 million](#) Americans suffer from headaches, making it the 3rd most common disease in the world, impacting 1 out of 7 people. While there are many different “triggers” such as alcohol, chocolate, scents, and other factors that cause headaches and migraines, most people who suffer from chronic or recurring headaches have underlying neck problems that contribute to their headaches.

According to Stanford Health Care, some of the [common types of headaches](#) include:

- Tension
- Cervicogenic or neck muscle-related
- Migraine
- Secondary headaches from an underlying condition, such as fever, infectious disease, or sinus disorder

Regardless of the type of headache, waking up with pain can interfere with your day no matter what is on your calendar. Furthermore, while many of us are comfortable relying on pain medication to deal with the symptoms of a migraine or headache, there are other options to get to the root cause of your pain.

Physical therapy treatments are designed to help the body function at its peak. No matter how old you are or the frequency with which you have them, dealing with frequent headaches can be incredibly frustrating, but physical therapy can offer relief.

CHOOSE PHYSICAL THERAPY FOR HEADACHE RELIEF

How Can Physical Therapy Help?

Headaches and migraines are often associated with myofascial trigger points (tight and tender points in a muscle) and muscle spasms in the neck, shoulders, and upper back. Many headaches can be triggered by physical and/or emotional stress resulting in tension headaches. Tension headaches can be very painful and debilitating and can possibly trigger migraine headaches.

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LEARN MORE ABOUT HEADACHES AND MIGRAINES

Headache and Migraine Relief with Bay State Physical Therapy

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SEASONAL TIPS

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Visiting a physical therapist is an excellent alternative to traditional medication management of headaches. You can decrease the intensity, frequency, and duration of headaches with the help of Bay State Physical Therapy.

Here are four ways physical therapy can reduce headache pain:

1

Importance of Exercise

Studies have shown that increasing your activity levels can decrease pain and inflammation. Physical therapy also improves your range of motion as well as joint health and promotes overall health.

2

Education on Triggers

Physical therapists want their patients to understand the triggers that contribute to their headaches, such as poor posture, eye strain, and even sleeping in the wrong position. Recognizing these triggers can help patients prevent as many painful headaches as possible.

3

Hands-on Care

Physical therapists provide hands-on treatment techniques designed to increase the mobility of your head and neck, decrease muscle tension and spasms, and improve posture. If additional modalities are needed, such as dry needling, your physical therapist will make a recommendation to help you get the most out of your therapy sessions.

4

Focus On Posture

Do you spend a lot of time staring at a screen or driving in a car? Do you have a forward head or rounded shoulders? If so, your upper cervical spine may be causing pinching of nerves. Therefore, one aspect of care your physical therapist may implement includes correcting your posture and addressing tight pectoral muscles or weakened upper back muscles.



DON'T IGNORE YOUR HEADACHES - OVERCOME THEM!

Cut through the fog of your headaches with help from Bay State Physical Therapy! Your physical therapist will help get to the root cause of your pain and empower you to take control of your headaches to live a life full of motion. To schedule an appointment, contact your [nearest Bay State Physical Therapy office](#), or [click here](#) to request an appointment.

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EXERCISES OF THE MONTH

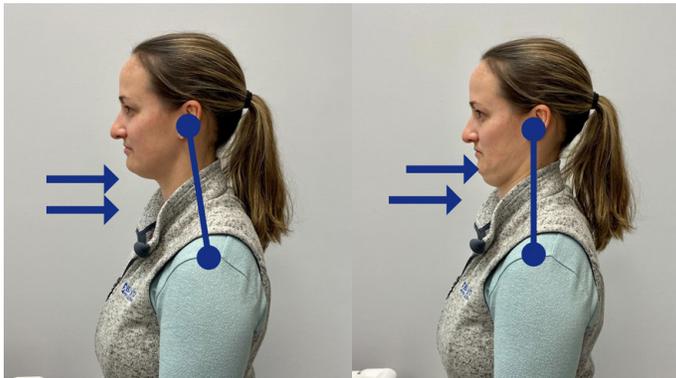
NECK PAIN RELIEF

Whether you are a young athlete looking to get stronger to prevent injuries, a desk-bound worker with a desire to improve posture to reduce neck strain, or an older adult wanting to stay safe on the go, a strong cervical spine is important.

[Brittany Little, PT, DPT, CSCS](#), the Clinic Manager at [Bay State Physical Therapy, Halifax](#) is here to help! Not only does Brittany treat many patients with neck pain, but she also has advanced training in the evaluation and treatment of concussions and is ImPACT Concussion trained and certified!



We recommend you do these exercises in a safe and comfortable setting. Check with your physical therapist if you have any questions or concerns when performing these exercises.



CHIN TUCKS

- Sit or stand with your back straight
- While looking straight ahead, slowly draw your head backward using the muscles in the front of your neck to initiate the movement
- Continue this movement until your ears are aligned over your shoulders, always keeping your head level with the floor
- Avoid tilting your head upward or downward while pulling backward
- Hold for 5 seconds
- Repeat for 2-3 sets of 10 repetitions

SCAPULAR RETRACTION

- Sit in a chair with your back straight and your arms resting at your side
- Slowly draw your shoulder blades together and downward (imagine you're holding a pencil between your shoulder blades)
- Hold for 5 seconds, then return to the starting position
- Repeat for 2-3 sets of 10 repetitions



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EXERCISES OF THE MONTH

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CERVICAL ISOMETRICS (SIDE BEND)

- Gently place your hand on one side of your head near your temples
- Keeping your head in a neutral position and looking forward, apply gentle pressure through your palm using your arm muscles
- You're attempting to push your head to the opposite side – resist this motion using your neck muscles while keeping your head in a stable position
- Hold for 5 seconds, then repeat in opposite direction
- Repeat for 2-3 sets of 10 repetitions

UPPER TRAPEZIUS STRETCH

- Stand with your head in a neutral, relaxed position
- Gently place your right hand on top of your head
- Allow your right ear to move toward your right shoulder, feeling a gentle stretch on the left side of your neck
- Allow the weight of your hand to aid in the stretch, but don't force it beyond a comfortable, light stretch
- Keep your shoulders level while you stretch
- Hold for 30 seconds then slowly return to a starting position
- Repeat 3 times before switching to stretch opposite side



CERVICAL ISOMETRICS (EXTENSION)

- Gently place your hand on the back of your head
- Keeping your head in a neutral position and looking forward, apply gentle pressure through your palm using your arm muscles
- You're attempting to push your head backward – resist this motion using your neck muscles, while keeping your head in a stable position
- Hold for 5 seconds
- Repeat for 2-3 sets of 10 repetitions

If you suffer from neck pain or headaches, working with a physical therapist can help. Choose PT First for neck pain relief and call your [nearest Bay State Physical Therapy](#) location to get started today!

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SERVICE SPOTLIGHT

DRY NEEDLING

Dry Needling is a technique that involves inserting a very thin needle into a tight muscle to cause a contraction followed by its release. Unlike acupuncture which targets the meridian line to balance the flow of energy, dry needling targets the specific point of a muscle where pain is present. The needle causes a “twitch” which causes the muscle to release the longstanding contraction.

When muscles become overburdened, they can develop knots that are called trigger points. Trigger points can be a source of longstanding pain, and when not resolved can limit muscle function. When the very thin needle your physical therapist uses is inserted into the trigger point, it triggers a ‘contract and relax’ reflex of the trigger point. This in turn helps to draw oxygenated blood to the painful area to release muscle tension and promote healing.

Dry needling is a service provided by a specially trained and certified physical therapist. It is also just one of many services available for treating trigger point pain. Before beginning dry needling, your physical therapist will thoroughly discuss the process and answer your questions so that you have a clear understanding of dry needling.



5 DRY NEEDLING QUESTIONS YOU MIGHT HAVE

Now's the time to stop ignoring your pain! Physical therapists have many tools at the ready to help their patients, and one of those is called dry needling. Here are some common [questions](#) and answers about dry needling.

1. How Big Is the Needle?

Dry Needling utilizes a very fine monofilament needle to penetrate the skin and myofascial layer, commonly targeting trigger points. The needles used come in varying lengths, and your physical therapist will choose the appropriate needle based on where your trigger point is in relation to the surface of your skin.

While you may be very familiar with the needles that are used for injections or IVs, the dry needle your physical therapist uses is very different. That being said, if you want to see the needle before you try dry needling, don't hesitate to ask your therapist to show you!

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2. What's a Trigger Point?

Myofascial knots or myofascial 'trigger points' are the result of the bands of tissue and muscle becoming tight or tense. While trigger points can occasionally improve on their own, left untreated these knots can lead to more significant pain. Trigger points can cause:

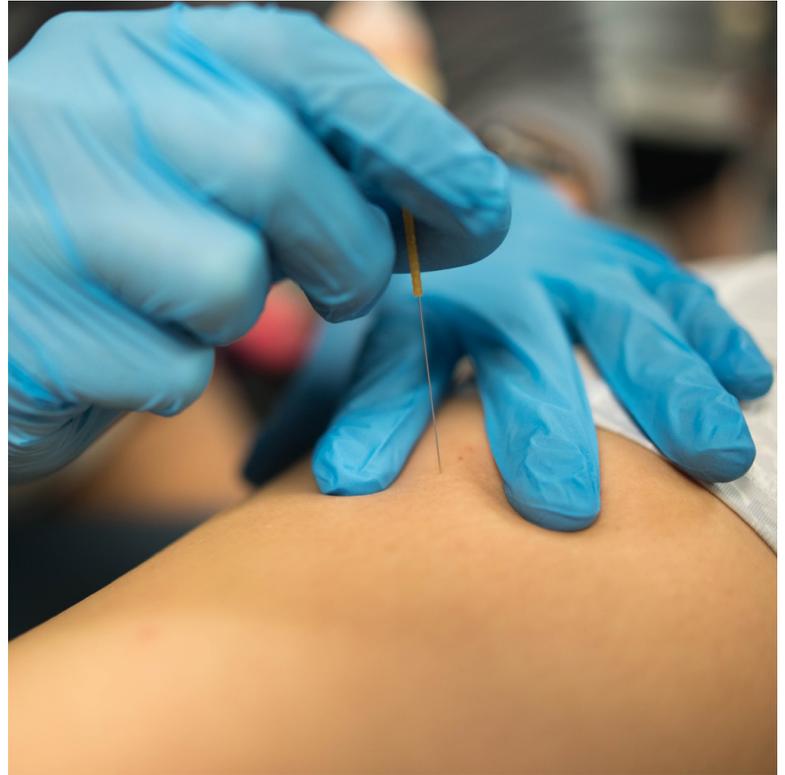
- Pain at the trigger point
- Muscle weakness
- 'Referred' pain in other areas of the body region
- Reduced range of motion

If you are dealing with any of the above symptoms, your [physical therapist may recommend](#) dry needling.

3. What's the Science Behind Dry Needling?

Dry Needling is based on contemporary knowledge of musculoskeletal and neurological anatomy, pathophysiology, and evidence-based research. Dry needling targets discrete, hypersensitive spots in the fascia of the skeletal muscle known as trigger points. Trigger points can be a source of longstanding pain, can limit movement, and affect function.

More simply, a very thin needle is inserted into the tender spot of a muscle to "trigger" a contract/relax response. This response stimulates oxygenated blood to be drawn to the area of the trigger point. In turn, this releases the trigger point and promotes healing.



4. What Conditions Can Dry Needling Help?

Your physical therapist will discuss your medical history and help determine if you are suitable to try dry needling. Dry needling can be [beneficial for many of the conditions](#) that physical therapists treat. Some of the most common include:

- Muscle pain in the [low back](#)
- [Tennis elbow or Golfer's elbow](#)
- [Shoulder](#) and [rotator cuff](#) pain
- [Neck pain](#) and [chronic headaches](#)
- [Hip and leg pain](#)
- [Osteoarthritis](#)
- [Sciatica](#)

5. Will it Hurt?

When performed effectively, dry needling elicits a twitch response as the area of the muscle contracts and relaxes. Some patients describe the sensation as a short muscle cramp that quickly relaxes. Most patients say they are surprised when the muscle twitches but that it is not painful and does not hurt.

LEARN MORE ABOUT DRY NEEDLING

If you are injured or are dealing with pain, you are not alone. As your partner in health, Bay State Physical Therapy is just a call or click away. Contact your [nearest Bay State Physical Therapy location](#) or [click here](#) to request an evaluation.

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KNOW A GREAT PHYSICAL THERAPIST? WE ARE HIRING!

As we grow, we need more great physical therapists to join our team. We offer:

- Early Career Advancement Program with opportunities for promotion in 6 months
- Robust clinical education program
- Structured onboarding and mentorship
- Attractive pay & strong benefits

Refer a Physical Therapist

Join Our Team!

At Bay State Physical Therapy, we are nationally ranked in the top 1% for patient satisfaction.

100+
Locations

Find One Near You!

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We'd Love to Hear from You!

Have something you'd like to learn more about in an upcoming newsletter?

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