

How Physical Therapy Can Aid Recovery From COVID-19

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The COVID-19 pandemic has affected countless individuals' mental and physical health since it first began over a year ago. Now, as our world begins to recover from this health crisis, many people will be facing new challenges. Some individuals who contracted COVID-19 may be left facing potentially debilitating symptoms even weeks-to-months after overcoming the virus itself. These individuals, termed "long haulers," may be left with a wide range of symptoms that could negatively impact their ability to resume normal activities and actively participate in their home or work life. The full, long-term effects of the COVID-19 pandemic remain a mystery. However, there are actions that can be taken now to help aid individuals experiencing "long-COVID," or "post-COVID-19 syndrome."

Long-COVID symptoms can vary drastically from person-to-person, affect different organ systems, and may change over time. Potential symptoms may include: breathlessness, fatigue, muscle/joint pain, "brain fog," difficulty concentrating, memory issues, headaches, cardiovascular issues, GI problems, and anxiety/depression. Additionally, people who required a prolonged hospitalization or an ICU stay when sick with COVID-19 have an increased risk for weakness and deconditioning resulting from bed rest. If you are recovering from COVID-19 and battling any of these long-COVID symptoms, you may want to consider physical therapy treatment.

Physical therapists are highly trained medical professionals who are experts at helping people recover their mobility and function after a serious illness, injury, and disease. They will provide a variety of different treatments designed to help reduce pain, manage fatigue, improve activity tolerance, and return each person to their previous level of functioning. Additionally, there is an increasing body of evidence which suggests that routine physical activity and exercise can be helpful for managing depression and anxiety, as well as cognitive deficits.

The State of Illinois allows direct access to physical therapy, and everyone has the right to choose where they go for physical therapy. Although it is important to keep your doctor informed about any changes in your symptoms when recovering from COVID-19, a physician's prescription is not required to begin physical therapy treatment. You can always make an appointment with a physical therapist first for an evaluation and to begin treatment for post-COVID-19 syndrome. Physical therapists are extensively trained in recognizing abnormalities that may warrant a doctor visit or further testing, and will refer you appropriately if indicated. You don't have to suffer ongoing long-COVID symptoms; call a locally-owned and operated physical therapy clinic and start feeling better right away!