

INTRODUCTION TO
**Physical
Therapy
for Physical
Therapist Assistants**

Second Edition

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Contents

PREFACE	vii
REVIEWERS	ix
PART I THE PROFESSION OF PHYSICAL THERAPY	I
Chapter 1 Development of the Physical Therapy Profession	3
History of Rehabilitation Treatments Including Therapeutic Exercises	3
History of the Physical Therapy Profession	7
Membership in the APTA	18
Chapter 2 The Physical Therapist Assistant as a Member of the Health Care Team	23
Direction and Supervision of the Physical Therapist Assistant	23
The Health Care Team and the Rehabilitation Team	27
Chapter 3 Physical Therapy Clinical Practice	39
Patient and Client Management in Clinical Practice	39
Guide to Physical Therapist Practice	40
Physical Therapy Clinical Settings	45
Physical Therapy Employment	48
Fiscal Management of a Physical Therapy Service	51
Quality Assurance	52
Clinical Trends	54
PART II MAJOR PHYSICAL THERAPY PRACTICE SPECIALTIES	57
Chapter 4 Musculoskeletal (Orthopedic) Physical Therapy	59
Musculoskeletal Examination and Evaluation	60
Musculoskeletal Interventions	63
Examples of Musculoskeletal Disorders and Interventions	79
Chapter 5 Neurologic and Cardiopulmonary Physical Therapy	89
Neurologic Examination and Assessment	89
Neurologic Interventions	92
Examples of Neurologic Disorders and Interventions	94
Cardiopulmonary Physical Therapy: Assessment and Interventions	100
Examples of Cardiopulmonary Diseases and Interventions	102
Chapter 6 Pediatric, Geriatric, and Integumentary Physical Therapy	107
Pediatric Physical Therapy	107
Pediatric Team	107

Geriatric Physical Therapy	113
Elements of Integumentary Examination and Assessment	116
PART III ETHICAL AND LEGAL ISSUES	121
Chapter 7 Ethics and Professionalism	123
Medical Ethics Versus Medical Law	123
Biomedical Ethical Principles	124
Autonomy and Patients' Rights	130
Understanding Cultural Competence	131
Informed Consent	136
Ethics Documents for Physical Therapists	137
Ethics Documents for Physical Therapist Assistants	137
Professionalism	138
Chapter 8 Laws and Regulations	141
Sources of Laws and Examples	141
Laws Affecting Physical Therapy Practice	142
Licensure Laws	144
Occupational Safety and Health Administration's Federal Standards	145
Domestic Violence and Legal Issues	147
Malpractice Laws	152
PART IV COMMUNICATION	157
Chapter 9 Communication Basics	159
Verbal and Nonverbal Communication	159
Therapeutic Communication: Empathy Versus Sympathy	160
The Therapeutic Relationship	161
Types of Communication Forms	162
Chapter 10 Introduction to Documentation and the Medical Record	171
Medical Records	171
POMR, SOAP, and SOMR	172
SOAP Writing Format	176
Legal Issues in Documentation	181
Evidence-Based Care Documentation	182
Computerized Documentation	182
Chapter 11 Teaching, Learning, and Medical Terminology	183
Communication Methods for Teaching and Learning	183
Communication Methods for Patient Education	188
Introduction to Elements of Medical Terminology	189
Standardized Titles and Names Used in Physical Therapy	191
Chapter 12 Reimbursement and Research	193
Reimbursement Issues in Physical Therapy	193
Basic Research Elements	196
PART V PATIENT CARE ESSENTIALS FOR THE PHYSICAL THERAPIST ASSISTANT	205
Chapter 13 Infection Control, Patient Preparation, Vital Signs, and Patient Safety in Clinical Settings	207
Infection Control	207
Patient Preparation	214

Vital Signs	215
Patient Safety in Clinical Settings	223
Chapter 14 Patient Positioning, Body Mechanics, and Transfer Techniques	225
Patient Positioning	225
Positioning for Amputations	228
Body Mechanics and Transfer Techniques	228
Chapter 15 Wheelchairs, Assistive Devices, and Gait Training	243
Wheelchairs	243
Gait Training and Assistive Devices	251
APPENDICES	273
Appendix A Hippocratic Oath	275
Appendix B Patient’s Bill of Rights	277
Appendix C American Physical Therapy Association’s Code of Ethics for Physical Therapists	279
Appendix D American Physical Therapy Association’s Standards of Ethical Conduct for Physical Therapist Assistants	281
Appendix E Medical Terminology in Health Care and Physical Therapy	283
GLOSSARY	289
INDEX	293



Preface

Welcome to the *Second Edition of Introduction to Physical Therapy for Physical Therapist Assistants*.

The shared goal of all physical therapists, physical therapist assistants, physical therapist students, and physical therapist assistant students, is to make a positive difference in the quality of our patients' lives. In order to accomplish this goal, we must use our knowledge and technical skills along with our desire to help the patients placed in our care.

In addition to displaying technical competence, our clinical capabilities must also include a compassionate and empathetic dedication to our patients. Often, physical therapy clinicians, physical therapists, and physical therapist assistants, feel proud and satisfied when their patients walk independently without the use of assistive devices, without pain and restriction, and when they participate normally in activities of daily living. Clinicians employed in the area of sports medicine can be proud of their patients who perform well and achieve honors in competitions.

As health care providers, we receive inspiration from the history of our profession, from our teachers and mentors, and from our desire to succeed. Inspiration for our success and a clear vision for the future of physical therapy come from our patients, our colleagues, and our professional association. Because our profession is relatively recent, the narrative of our educational process is still developing. Physical therapy has rapidly evolved from

the dedicated reconstruction aides of World War I to the professionals who are the clinicians, educators, and researchers of the present.

With the evolution of greater professionalism, physical therapy education has also expanded. At the beginning of the 20th century, the term "physiotherapy technician" was applied to what we now call the physical therapist. In less than 90 years, we grew into expert clinicians and educators, having to achieve graduate degrees in order to enter our profession. I believe that the majority of students in the field of physical therapy are attracted to the profession for the same purpose as our founders: *to be capable of helping people*. Students enter educational programs in the hopes of gaining new knowledge and skills, graduating, becoming licensed, and working in the field as proficient and competent clinicians.

Many beginning students who use this book may not be conversant with the profession of physical therapy, and therefore, may not completely understand all the various settings of patient rehabilitation. Although there are many adequate textbooks currently in use that provide information for the advanced student, the purpose of this introductory text is to meet, specifically, the very distinct and unique needs of the *beginning* physical therapist assistant student.

This textbook consists of five parts: Part I deals with "The Profession of Physical Therapy"; Part II describes the "Major Physical Therapy Practice Specialties"; Part III

includes “Ethical and Legal Issues”; Part IV discusses “Communication”; and the final part, Part V, is dedicated to “Patient Care Essentials for the Physical Therapist Assistant.” There are also appendices and a glossary to conclude this book.

The *Second Edition of Introduction to Physical Therapy for Physical Therapist Assistants* encompasses the history and the development of the physical therapist and physical therapist assistant professions, including the evolution of the American Physical Therapy Association, as well as information regarding: professionalism, professional roles, interpersonal communication, physical therapist assistant’s behavior and conduct, teaching and learning, evidence-based practice, documentation, medical records, patient safety, assistive devices, and major elements of

patient care. This text can be used throughout the duration of the PTA program.

New to the *Second Edition*:

- Expanded information on the development of physical therapy from its “Formative Years” (1914–1920) to the APTA’s “Vision and Application of Scientific Pursuit” of today
- Key concepts from the latest version of the APTA’s “Guide to Physical Therapist Practice”
- Updated and expanded information on the relationship between the PT and the PTA
- Updated information on the latest clinical trends including sections on wellness, health promotion, and disease prevention



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