

Why Choose a Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation Physician?

Physical medicine and rehabilitation (PM&R) physicians, or physiatrists (pronounced *fizz ee at' trists*), are specialists in diagnosing and treating problems of the musculoskeletal system. They take thorough histories and perform physical examinations to find the source of your pain, injury, or disability, even when standard diagnostic tests don't reveal specific problems.

In addition, PM&R physicians direct the team of healthcare professionals that treat you. If any other services are needed, such as those of a physical therapist or athletic trainer, the PM&R physician supervises, collaborates with, and coordinates them. The result is a specially designed treatment program tailored for you.

Education and Training

To become a PM&R physician, individuals must successfully complete four years of medical school and four additional years of residency training. Residency training includes one year spent developing fundamental clinical skills and three additional years of training in the full scope of the specialty.

There are 80 accredited residency programs in physical medicine and rehabilitation in the United States. Many PM&R physicians choose to pursue additional advanced degrees (MS, PhD) or complete fellowship training in a specific area of the specialty. Fellowships are available for specialized study in such areas as musculoskeletal rehabilitation, pediatrics, traumatic brain injury, spinal cord injury, and sports medicine.

To become board-certified in physical medicine and rehabilitation, a PM&R physician must pass both a written and oral examination given by the American Board of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation (ABPM&R).

Diagnosis and Treatment Expertise

Because PM&R physicians offer an aggressive, non-surgical approach to pain and injury, these physicians are the ideal choice for the treatment of a wide variety of diseases and conditions. Here's a listing of just some of the conditions that PM&R physicians have extensive training in diagnosing and treating:

- Low Back Pain
- Neck Pain
- Fibromyalgia/Myofascial Pain
- Spinal Cord Injury
- Brain Injury
- Acute and Chronic Pain
- Arthritis
- Amputee Rehabilitation
- Prosthetics/Orthotics
- Cancer
- Burns
- Stroke and Neurological Disorders
- Multiple Sclerosis
- Cardiac Disorders
- Osteoporosis
- Musculoskeletal Disorders
- Work Injuries

(continued on back)

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Treatment Philosophy

PM&R physicians believe in treating the whole patient, not just the patient's symptoms. They share their medical knowledge to help patients understand their condition and provide the tools and resources to manage it. They use a variety of treatment methods to reduce or eliminate problems and to decrease the possibility of recurrence. This comprehensive approach produces not only cost-effective results, but also a high degree of patient satisfaction.

Through integrated, focused care and comprehensive diagnosis and treatment, PM&R physicians add quality to the lives of millions of patients each year.

Cited from: aaPM&R – American Academy of Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation

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