

How to Seize the Opportunity of using an Expert Physical Therapist in a Bodily Injury Case

Don't miss the opportunity of using a physical therapist as an expert medical witness in bodily injury cases. A physical therapist (PT) is a health care professional that can treat medical problems that involve the abilities to move and perform functional activities of daily living, and PT's must have a doctorate degree from an accredited college or university. PTs are licensed in each state and can make clinical diagnoses and evaluate reasons for bodily limitations, a patient's physical abilities and their functional capacity.



Physical therapists examine patients' medical histories and use test and measurements to determine the patient's strength, range of motion, balance and coordination, posture, muscle performance, and motor function.

A physical therapist can be the best professional to objectively test and describe to a jury the patients "true" physical limitations affecting their daily living and work. They can also offer an independent prognosis of the patient's condition, and offer testimony about the patient's present and future impairments. PTs can create their own plan for a patient's therapeutic intervention and make their own assessment of the patient's condition. They can also determine the patient's ability to be independent and reintegrate into the community or workplace after injury or illness.

Although many PT's routinely ask a patient to see a medical doctor first (to rule out cardiac or other more complex medical problems, it is not required a PT to see, diagnose and treat a patient (depending on the particular State's Practice Act). This is known as "Direct Access".

Physical Therapists are capable of evaluating and treating patients without the need for referral from another practitioner, but are ready to work in collaboration with other medical professionals. The Doctor of Physical Therapy is the authoritative practitioner in the diagnosis and treatment of movement dysfunction.

It is also a good idea to educate the Judge about the qualifications and credentialing of a physical therapist. Giving the judge a definition of "the practice of physical therapy" will help familiarize them with the PTs abilities as an expert and help ensure that the testimony goes into evidence.

Testimony about the PT service is only a part of what can be got out of PT testimony. Testimony of loss of bodily function ability to do employment tasks and daily living activities is also available from a PT expert.

PTs also tend to produce an abundance of objective measurements that can be used to demonstrate functional loss or abilities. These measurements often make excellent trial exhibits. Physical Therapists also relate to the jurors more easily due to their calm and caring demeanor.

A PT's records or testimony regarding patient's statements of state of mind, pain level, emotion, sensation, or physical condition is admissible as not subject to the hearsay rule. This is often more effective than using the plaintiff, or a member of the plaintiff's family's testimony.

Bodily Injury Cases:

- Work – Related Injuries
- Motor Vehicle Accidents
- Slip and Falls

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