

**THE PHYSICAL  
THERAPY INSTITUTE**<sup>SM</sup>  
ORTHOPEDICS AND SPORTS MEDICINE

# NEWSLETTER

[WWW.PHYSICALTHERAPYINSTITUTE.COM](http://WWW.PHYSICALTHERAPYINSTITUTE.COM)



## HOW TO IDENTIFY & TREAT KNEE ARTHRITIS

Have you started to notice that your knees seem to be stiff and sore? Do you notice popping, clicking, or grinding sounds with squatting or climbing stairs? Are you experiencing pain that is worse in the morning but disappears throughout the day? You could be living with arthritis. At The Physical Therapy Institute you can find solutions to your arthritic pain and get back to living the life you enjoy!

Osteoarthritis is the most common type of arthritis and is known to cause a gradual breakdown of cartilage in the joints. Over time, the condition will typically worsen, leading to inflammation, more pain, and loss of motion in the joints. While arthritis can be debilitating, there's a lot that you can do to alleviate the pain and improve your function.

If you live with stiff, achy, or painful knees, contact The Physical Therapy Institute today to schedule a consultation. Our dedicated physical therapists will evaluate you, determine the areas of your daily life that are impacted, and create an individualized treatment plan for relieving the arthritic pains in your knee(s).



# WHAT TYPE OF ARTHRITIS AFFECTS THE KNEE JOINT?

Arthritis refers to any chronic condition that affects the cartilage of the joints. The main signs and symptoms include pain, inflammation, loss of motion, and impaired function. The Arthritis Foundation states that over 100 different types of arthritis exist.

Osteoarthritis is the most common type of arthritis found in the knee. This type of arthritis leads to a gradual breakdown of cartilage in the joints. This can occur from age, injury, or repetitive use of the affected joint(s).

When worn down, cartilage can no longer act as a cushion and shock absorber for the joints, resulting in bone-on-bone friction and painful inflammation.

**You do not need a doctor's prescription to seek physical therapy in the state of Pennsylvania you have direct access to physical therapy.**



Although aging is one of the most significant risk factors for osteoarthritis, obesity is also a significant contributor to developing osteoarthritis. Obese patients carry extra weight that increases the pressure through the joint and adds to cartilage breakdown. Recent research suggests that unhealthy diets (i.e., processed foods, high sugar content, etc.) are associated with increased inflammation throughout the body. This inflammation increases the likelihood of experiencing knee pain than patients with healthy weight and diets and similar cartilage damage. There are also physical risk factors associated with increased knee osteoarthritis, including:

- Injury to the joint
- Participation in certain occupational activities (i.e., repetitive movements like bending or prolonged positions like sitting/driving)
- Participation in sports (i.e., contact sports)
- Thigh flexor muscle weakness and knee osteoarthritis

## **Common symptoms of knee arthritis**

It can sometimes be challenging to determine if you are genuinely experiencing arthritic symptoms or if you simply have a joint that is irritated from prolonged positions or from being overworked. The most common signs and symptoms of knee arthritis include:

- Pain in the affected joint, which may spread to surrounding soft tissue
- Stiffness that leads to loss of motion
- Inflammation including warmth/heat around the joint



- Joint creaking and pain with movement (especially when weight bearing)
- Abnormalities in gait (such as limping)
- Weakness of the muscles surrounding the joint

If you have been suffering and looking for relief, do not hesitate to contact us today before your condition worsens.

## **How physical therapy can help arthritis**

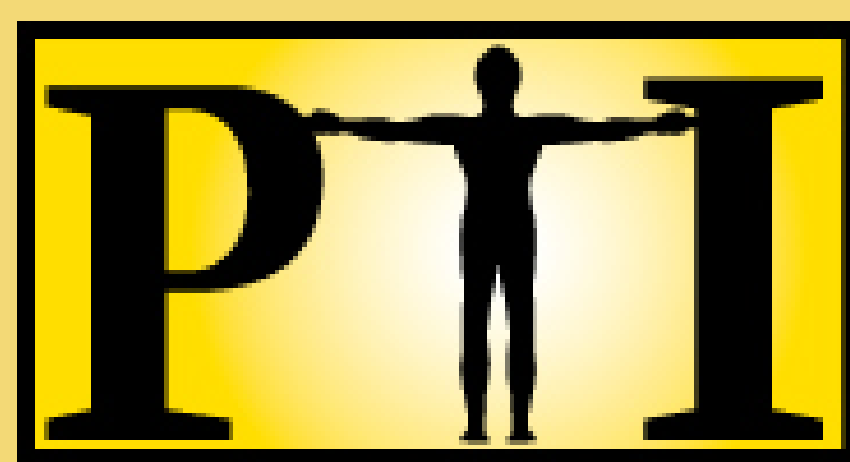
Regardless of the cause of arthritis, physical therapy plays a significant role in treating its symptoms. Physical therapy should always be the first treatment method before resorting to more aggressive procedures, such as surgery. Your knee treatments will consist of a thorough history to understand more about your typical daily schedule and the everyday demands on your body. We want to get an idea of your overall health status, including factors contributing to your condition. Physical therapy works by reducing the pain and restoring the motion in your joints. Treatments to improve strength, balance, and coordination have also been shown to help people maintain their function. The healthier your knee joints and the stronger your muscles, the less wear-and-tear, thus reducing inflammation and pain. Your physical therapist will guide you through targeted, goal-specific exercises to reduce inflammation, provide greater support to the joints, and help your muscles regain their overall strength.

## **Get started today!**

At The Physical Therapy Institute, we are dedicated to treating each arthritic case individually. Each patient will receive a personalized treatment plan based on their specific needs. Contact us today to get your knees started on the right path to health. Discover how you can move freely once again with the help of physical therapy!

Sources: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5832048/>  
<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S106345841931297X>  
<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/25785564/>

# STAFF FEATURE



**MARY RECTENWALD, PT,  
CENTER MANAGER  
DERRY CLINIC**

Mary is currently serving as a Physical Therapist/Office Manager at The PT Group Physical Therapy: treating pre/post-surgical and non-surgical orthopedic conditions, vertigo, balance, post CVA, post-cancer/illness, athletic, auto, and work injuries. She has been a NATA Certified Athletic Trainer for 34 years with experience as a head athletic trainer at both the high school and collegiate levels. Previous clinical and aquatic rehabilitation experience has included work with amateur, professional, and Olympic athletes participating in sports that have varied from rodeo to professional boxing and everything in between. Her background in Health and Physical Education Teaching/Administration has helped to serve as a platform on which to establish rehabilitation programs geared to the total health and wellbeing of the patient, giving consideration to their personal goals in addition to the obvious focus of returning them to as close to their pre-injury/illness status as possible.



# HOW DO WEATHER CHANGES AFFECT PAIN LEVELS?

Do you notice that your joints start aching every time a storm front comes through? Have you ever wondered if the temperature outside really affects your pain? Or is it an old wives' tale? At The Physical Therapy Institute, our team will help you get to the root of your pain, no matter the temperature outside and no matter the season!

It is estimated that as many as 75% of people with arthritis believe their pain is affected by the weather. Most report their pain is made worse by the cold, damp weather (i.e., low atmospheric pressure).

While scientists have no consensus on the exact connection between weather and joint pain, a few theories about the relationship exist. For example, your pain levels can intensify if you are stressed, anxious, or depressed. There is some evidence that colder or inclement weather may trigger these emotions, which can make pain feel much worse.

Colder weather can also reduce blood flow to the extremities so your body can conserve and pump more blood to the lungs and heart. Reduced blood flow can result in stiffness and pain in the joints. However, research into tolerance of pain has shown



that with more prolonged exposure to cold, our body adapts and becomes more tolerant of pain, not less!

It is theorized that changes in the seasons will affect our daily habits, which influences our pain levels. For example, as a rule, people tend to be more active in the spring and summer months and less so in the winter. Research has shown that inactivity can lead to joint pain and potentially break down the cartilage, creating more severe degeneration and increased pain.

A recent study concluded that there might be some connection between changes in weather and pain levels, but it was not the temperature itself. The evidence pointed to low-pressure days where it was damp and windy. The data suggested no connection between actual rainfall and pain.

Sources: <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41746-019-0180-3>

<https://www.newswise.com/articles/weather-can-affect-pain-tolerance-reports-study-in-pain>

[https://journals.lww.com/pain/fulltext/2020/04000/are\\_weather\\_conditions\\_associated\\_with\\_chronic.3.aspx](https://journals.lww.com/pain/fulltext/2020/04000/are_weather_conditions_associated_with_chronic.3.aspx)



# FREE IN-PERSON WORKSHOPS

[www.physicaltherapyinstitute.com/workshops/](http://www.physicaltherapyinstitute.com/workshops/)

The Physical Therapy Institute hosts FREE workshops that focus on a specific type of pain or condition at select PTI locations. These hour-long workshops are hosted by the Physical Therapist at the clinic, and focus on getting you back to normal naturally, without the use of medications, injections or surgeries. To register for the workshops, follow the link above or click below! To learn more about the workshops, please call 724-503-6993 or email [jwatkins@pt-institute.com](mailto:jwatkins@pt-institute.com).

***SIGN UP TODAY FOR OUR  
FREE KNEE, LOW BACK, & SHOULDER  
PAIN WORKSHOPS***



***REGISTER TODAY***



## PATIENT SUCCESS SPOTLIGHT



***“Left with a ‘spring in my step’!”***

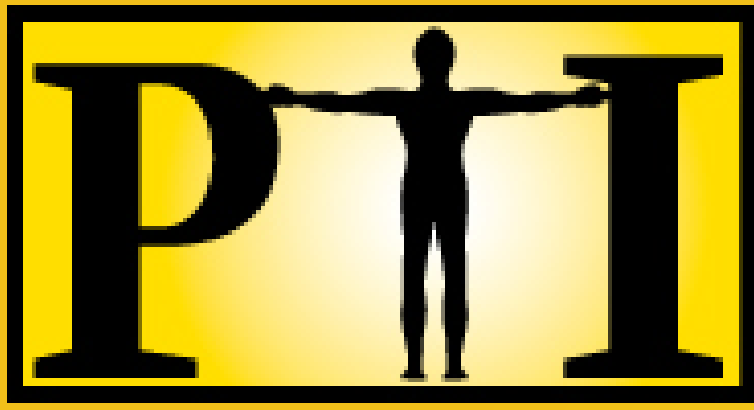
*“Came in with a cane...left with a ‘spring in my step’! Thank you!”*

**– Ray M.**

TAKE YOUR HEALTH TO  
**THE NEXT LEVEL**

**COME BACK TO PT!**

Are you in pain? Have you sustained an injury?  
**Give us a call at a clinic nearest to you today to  
schedule an appointment!**



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<b>Irwin</b>	724.395.7701
<b>White Oak</b>	412.517.7842
<b>Monroeville</b>	412.693.6210
<b>Moon Township</b>	412.725.0193
<b>Mount Lebanon</b>	412.923.0923
<b>Murrysville</b>	724.948.1202
<b>Robinson Physical Therapy</b>	412.866.2764
<b>Derry Clinic</b>	724.948.0901
<b>Greensburg</b>	724.402.5770
<b>Harrison City</b>	724.923.4053
<b>Jeannette</b>	724.558.8009
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