

PLAYING THROUGH



Healthy Life. Better Game.

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY

Occupational Therapy (OT) is a field of healthcare that focuses on helping individuals of all ages improve their ability to engage in activities of daily living (ADLs) and regain independence following injury, illness, or surgery. Occupational Therapy can provide benefits to a multitude of patients, but two primary treatment areas include orthopedics (including post-operative care) and Neurological conditions (Stroke, Parkinson's, Dementia, etc).

1. Common Orthopedic Conditions:

a. Carpal Tunnel Syndrome: Occupational therapists can provide interventions to alleviate pain and edema in the wrist/hand and restore hand function. Treatments may include therapeutic exercises, pain modalities, and ergonomic and activity modification strategies to enable individuals to perform ADLs with minimal discomfort. Splinting may be recommended to reduce aggravation to the nerves in the wrist.

b. Medial/Lateral Epicondylitis: Often caused by overuse/repetitive trauma, OT will focus on reducing pain and inflammation in the affected tendons, increasing range of motion, and improving grip strength. Therapists may utilize modalities such as ice, heat, and ultrasound, along with therapeutic exercises and manual techniques to facilitate healing and functional recovery.

c. Shoulder Injuries: Occupational therapy plays a crucial role in rehabilitating shoulder injuries, such as rotator cuff tears, shoulder impingement syndrome, or arthritis-related degeneration. Therapists may employ a combination of exercises, manual therapy techniques, and functional training to restore shoulder strength, range of motion, and stability. They can also provide guidance on

adapting ADLs to minimize strain on the shoulder joint during the healing process.

d. Post-operative Conditions: OT assists with post-operative care across the spectrum of surgical procedures. When not directly providing care to the upper extremity (shoulder, elbow, wrist, hand repairs), OT's routinely assist with adaptive equipment education and training to maximize safety and functional abilities during the rehabilitation process. This can include, but is not limited to showering, dressing, self-feeding, and personal hygiene tasks.

2. Neurological Conditions:

a. CVA – Cerebrovascular Accident (Stroke), Parkinson's, Dementia:

With neurological rehab, OT assists with safety education and training, adaptive equipment recommendations and training to maximize functional abilities (showering, dressing, feeding, personal hygiene), and specific neurological treatments to regain/maximize lost extremity functions. Therapeutic exercises may include gross and fine motor coordination to improve dexterity throughout the upper extremity, combined with cognitive retraining to maximize safety and independence with necessary mobility and ADL's.

In all these conditions, occupational therapists assess the individual's specific functional limitations, develop personalized treatment plans, and collaborate with the patient to set realistic goals. The interventions are designed to improve the individual's ability to perform ADLs, enhance independence, and optimize overall quality of life. Additionally, occupational therapists provide guidance to caregivers and family members to ensure a supportive environment for the individual's recovery and functional improvement.

*- with Cody Walker, PT, DPT, OTW/L
for The Magnolia News*

Continued





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