

35 Frequently Asked Questions About



MANUAL PHYSICAL THERAPY

By Leading International Manual Therapist,
Dr. David Middaugh, PT, DPT, FAAOMPT

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El Paso Manual Physical Therapy, PLLC

About The Author

Dr. David graduated from Jefferson High School in 2004. He then attended the University of Texas at Austin through 2007 on a full-ride scholarship completing a 4 year degree in 3.5 years. He then went on to complete a doctorate in physical therapy at Texas State University - San Marcos in 2011. Dr. David then completed a unique fellowship/ residency training in 2015.



Less than 1% of physical therapists in the nation have completed this level of specialization. Having only been a PT for a little over a decade, this gives Dr. David the skills and knowledge of an expert clinician that has practiced for 30+ years.

Dr. David founded El Paso Manual Physical Therapy with the intent of helping people avoid surgery, get off pain medication and keep up an active lifestyle. In 2019, Dr. David started posting regularly to YouTube and has since then seen the EPMPT channel grow to over 250,000 subscribers. He continues to use the platform to share expert tips, advice, and exercises to people all around the world.

Introduction

Welcome to this FAQ Guide!

This was written to help lift the lid on Manual Physical Therapy. I will share with you 35 common questions, provide answers, offer clarity, and debunk myths that many people have concerning Manual Physical Therapy.

This special guide is for health conscious individuals who are serious about their health.

Particularly, those who are determined enough to do something about their health and want to do whatever it takes to find a way to improve and optimize their health.

These questions are compiled from years of taking questions via phone calls, emails, social media comments, livestream chats, as well as from the people that we see in our Manual Physical Therapy clinic in person. All of these questions have one thing in common:

They come from those who value their health enough to go out of their way to ask questions when something is not right in their body.

They want to know exactly how Manual Physical Therapy can help them achieve their goal of returning to great health. Let's get started!

35 Frequently Asked Questions

Q1: How long before I feel the difference from Manual Physical Therapy treatment?

Dr. David: A good Manual Physical Therapist will take 10-15 minutes to tell you what's going on and then let you know that natural solutions available to improve the problem.

Shouldn't take much longer.

Next, the speed at which the pain problem is resolved is completely dependent upon your age, how long you've suffered, how severe it is, as well as the treatment skills of the PT.

Rarely does one spend more than 2-4 weeks (unless there are long standing problems, severe injury, or multiple areas involved) in our care before leaving happy.

It often works that quick.

Q2: What is Manual Physical Therapy?

Dr. David: Manual Therapy is specialized hands-on treatment with the goal of loosening tight muscles, gaining full mobility in joints, ligaments, tendons, and nerves. It's a specialty that very few physical

therapists pursue, yet many physical therapists are familiar with a few manual therapy techniques they quickly covered in PT school. Getting specialist Manual Therapy training requires an extra 3-5 years of study beyond getting a doctorate in physical therapy.

Q3: Do I get personal support (from the Manual Therapists) if I need it?

Dr. David: Absolutely yes! At our clinic, you'll work with the same Manual Therapist every visit. Each client's treatment plan is customized for the individual. You'll be able to communicate with your therapist between sessions if you need to.

Q4: Does Manual Physical Therapy help someone like me?

Dr. David: Here's a list of the types of people Manual Physical Therapy helps:

- 1. People aged 30-70 who love to be active.** - Why? Because men, women and couples on-the-go have lots of good reasons to get better fast.
- 2. People still working (and want to remain that way.)** Especially sales people, managers, engineers, office workers, teachers, manual workers, nurses, health care workers, lawyers, and even doctors. Why? Because they need to move easily and sit comfortably for long periods of time in order to perform well in their jobs.

3. **People aged 55+ who are determined to remain independent.** - Why? Because many people see the impact that ill physical health has had on their elderly parents.
4. **Especially active and involved grandparent.** - Why? Grandparents who play games with their grandkids, help with schoolwork or like to walk with them to and from school, often tell us that's why they felt the need to come and try Manual Physical Therapy.
5. **People who take their health very seriously.** - Why? A lot of the people who visit us are very pro-active about their health. They read up on health topics, try to eat right, take vitamins or other supplements such as cod liver oil and do their best to stay out of the MDs office or hospital. The very same motivations to stay out of the MD office are the reasons why you might come to see a Manual Physical Therapist.

Q5: What if I book an appointment today, then before I get to you, there's a positive change in my condition and I don't need to come to see you anymore?

Dr. David: Great! Best outcome! Just give us a call to cancel your appointment and we will cancel it from our schedule and ask that you keep in touch to let us know how you're doing. I often recommend at the least to come in for one visit to make sure your motion, flexibility and strength are good and balanced. This way you will not have a repeat of the issue in near future.

Q6: What should I wear to treatments?

Dr. David: Our office staff can tell you this on the phone, but you never have to remove large chunks of clothing.

To make your Manual Physical Therapy experience as comfortable as possible please keep in mind the location of your injured body part.

For example, if you have a lower back or shoulder injury, a loose top would be ideal. For a knee problem, please bring shorts, etc.

Occasionally patients will ask us if it would be easier or more convenient for us to provide treatment if an item can be removed completely.

You are free to make this decision.

Q7: What if I don't want to make another appointment after my first visit, do you take it personally?

Dr. David: Not at all! It's fine by me. Our first priority is to tell you what's going wrong and then tell you what would be *your* best options for care.

Once we've done that, it is your decision on how you would like to handle your care. We KNOW we can give you amazing care and results.

Q8: How likely is it that Manual Physical Therapy will be able to help me?

Dr. David: If your problem or concern is one of pain and or stiffness in the muscles or joints of the following area(s):

Back • Hip • Knee • Neck/Shoulder • Ankle • Foot/Ankle • Wrist/Hand

Then it's 99% likely that Manual Physical Therapy will be able to help you, and there are various ways we might do that.

Q9: Can I talk to a Specialist before I book just to confirm Manual Physical Therapy is right for me?

Dr. David: Absolutely!

Just call us at (915) 503-1314, or even email your questions to info@epmanualphysicaltherapy.com, and we will get back to you ASAP.

Q10: Isn't this just for younger people who are injured and who play sports?

Dr. David: Absolutely NOT. I'll be the first to admit that Manual Physical Therapy helps people who do play sports (I have worked with

pro golfers, NBA players, NFL players and elite endurance athletes) but, Manual Physical Therapy is actually much more valuable to help people who are aged 35+ who just want to keep active and on-the-go for as long as is possible.

Q11: Will I get any exercises or anything to take home with me?

Dr. David: Only if the time is right and your Manual Physical Therapist thinks that you doing them is not going to make your pain worse. We will give you as many tips as possible that you can use when you go back home that night.

Q12: What will happen if I don't choose to go and see a Manual Physical Therapist?

Dr. David: Your current predicament will continue, and you'll run the risk of doing unforeseen and unknown damage to your joints if they're not moved back into the correct position.

A failure to adhere to the right recovery program, after injury, could increase the risk of early onset arthritis in joints.

9 days is an important milestone – if pain and or stiffness is still there at this point, it isn't going to go away on its own.

Q14: This only happened the other day, and I'm in a lot of pain. How long should I leave it before I come in and see a Manual Physical Therapist for help?

Dr. David: ASAP. There will always be a number of things that we can do. Sometimes it's as simple as "do this, but don't do that."

The first will be to tell you what NOT to do.

So many people make fatal, miss informed mistakes when it comes to dealing with sudden pain.

Every decision that you get wrong in the first few days will very likely add to the length of time it will take to get better.

Q14: Somebody mentioned a chiropractor to me, what's the difference between that and Manual Physical Therapy?

Dr. David: To be brief, a Manual Physical Therapy looks for a cure. Our goal is to help you to the point that you will not need to constantly keep coming back to us.

That means a Manual Physical Therapist will make you a plan to work on stopping the injury from happening again.

We have very similar techniques as osteopaths and chiropractors, such as manipulation of your spine. However, we do added things such as

massage and stretching. The combination of that, plus exercises and posture correction will reduce your pain fast, but also help you manage your pain in the coming years to avoid the need for repetitive visits.

Osteopaths and chiropractors are both fantastically effective at reducing back pain and many of the good ones will even refer their patients to a Manual Physical Therapist for things like massage and exercises that they sometimes don't do.

Q15: I have health insurance, do you take my insurance?

Dr. David: No... (thankfully). The reason we do not take any insurances is so that we can provide you with treatment that is not influenced by insurance programs.

Many people don't know this, but often times, insurances can strongly influence what treatments are allowed and not allowed on people.

We found that 9 times out of 10, this was slowing down progress with clients and making them take the long way to feeling better.

In many cases, the treatment paths that insurance companies set for people lead them to more medications and surgery. Unbelievable!

Q16: I can't work this thing out. One minute I'm not bothered by it, then the next it can literally take my breath away. Just when I think it's getting better, it hits me again! What if I come in and see you and it doesn't hurt at that time, will I be wasting my time?

Dr. David: No. Pain is not really what we do!

Manual Physical Therapy is about finding whatever it is that is causing the thing to happen in the first place.

If your injury is a few weeks old, 2 things are likely to be happening:

1. The joints and muscles are locked stiff, or jammed in one place. So every time you get to a certain point they don't want to move and will give off a sharp pain.
2. You're likely to have inflexible and weak muscles.

The combination of that plus locked joints = long term problems.

Q17: Is Manual Physical Therapy guaranteed to help me like I hope?

Dr. David: That depends on what your hope is, but like most things, there are no guarantees.

But after a few sessions we will know IF the therapy will be beneficial.

We do have great success, but IF there is an underlying cause that we cannot see or find, occasionally improvement does not occur.

Q18: Does this sort of thing happen to other people like me?

Dr. David: We see many people with the same sorts of injuries, all day long.

Particularly, the 35-64+ age group who suffer from aches, pains and stiffness.

Q19: What is the long term benefit of me choosing to go and see a Manual Physical Therapist?

Dr. David: You have the freedom in your life to do what you want and when you want to do it, without being limited by pain or stiffness.

Q20: How quickly will I be seen?

Dr. David: As of writing this, we're currently booked out 1 month, but we are doing everything we can to get extra help to see patients as fast as

possible. (We will always try to get you in sooner if a patient reschedules!)

Q21: I really don't have pain, I'm just experiencing lots of stiffness and tightness but I'm worried that something's going to start hurting. Should I be considering Manual Physical Therapy?

Dr. David: You are PERFECT for it (and us). Some people think that Manual Physical Therapy is about ending pain - that's only ONE thing we do.

But it isn't the BEST.

The goal is to stop you from ever getting to the point where you're in lots of pain by making you more loose and more flexible. Also to get your body stronger and able to withstand the amount of activity you want to do, no matter what your age is.

Q22: What's the difference between a good Manual Physical Therapist and bad one?

Just 3 things:

1. The amount of care taken, which is easy to spot.
2. The hands-on techniques and skills being used.
3. The ability to accurately diagnose an injury.

Q23: Can Manual Physical Therapy help me if I have arthritis?

Dr. David: Yes! But please understand it can't CURE it.

But it CAN very easily help manage the symptoms it causes.

Many people come to therapy aged 45+ and suffering with 'wear and tear' (arthritis) inside their knee joints.

We can minimize those aches and pains with the proper stretching and strengthening activities.

Q24: I have had clicking and cracking noises happening in my joints for a few years now. The pain is just starting to get worse. I'm 48. Is this for me?

Dr. David: Yes. You're an almost perfect candidate for Manual Physical Therapy.

This is a typical story.

Most joint problems begin with warning signs like the clicks and cracks you've been hearing.

Then a few years later comes the pain.

Q25: I go to the gym and I'm not in any pain in my knee when I rest. But it fires up whenever I push myself harder. Is that common and do I need Manual Physical Therapy?

Dr. David: Yes and yes. Most sports injuries settle down so that you can walk around and do simple everyday things without pain.

But as soon as you step it up a level or two, if the problem is still there, it lets you know in the way of tightness, pain or swelling and stiffness.

Q26: Is there anyone that Manual Physical Therapy ISN'T right for?

Dr. David: Yes. Anyone who is expecting a miracle and hoping to be fixed in one visit.

Rarely possible, particularly for injuries happening to men and women aged 35+.

Q27: What does “Manual” Physical Therapy treatment actually entail?

Dr. David: We do a combination of several techniques and treatment methods such as massage, stretching and loosening of joints and muscles. This is combined with exercises and advice to improve posture as well as mobility.

Some of the specific techniques we use are myofascial release, movement diagnosis, McKenzie style approach, PNF techniques and much more.

Q28: Is Manual Physical Therapy painful?

Dr. David: Not really. But it is true that the treatment is a very physical experience, and as such, treatments may be a little uncomfortable at times. But we will always aim to be as gentle as possible, cause minimal discomfort and to get your problem solved as fast as we can.

Before we do any therapy techniques we will tell you exactly what is about to happen, whether or not it is likely to hurt, and for how long.

Q29: Will I get some tips for what I can be doing at home to help myself get better quicker?

Dr. David: Absolutely. The aim is to help you in every which way that we can.

Primarily, we will do everything for you. But you're only with us for 45-60 minutes so we aim to arm you with the tools that you can use to make a difference very quickly and on your own.

Q30: How important are exercises to my recovery?

Dr. David: Not as much as you've been led to believe. They're more important to stop the problem from coming back.

They do play a role in your recovery but most people do the wrong ones, at the wrong time, in the wrong order, for the wrong reasons.

A good Manual Therapist will stop that from happening.

Q31: How long does the session last?

Dr. David: Typical sessions are just under an hour (55 minutes). We'll do lots of hands-on work and then coach you through any exercises you'll need to keep up between sessions.

Q32: Will I be in any pain after the treatment?

Dr. David: It is not uncommon to be sore the day after a session, mostly due to either us moving you in ways you are not used to, or you doing more than previously due to feeling better.

It is often unavoidable and most patients eventually agree that the pain is a nice sort of pain, one they know that is doing them some good, and is often no worse than the pain that they are already in.

The discomfort usually reduces as treatment progresses and we always advise you on things like ice, heat or certain exercises to help minimize that discomfort.

If it's painful the next day, ice usually soothes it!

Q33: Do I need a referral from my doctor?

Dr. David: No you do not need a referral to get started on treating your problem. You can call us and get started as soon as we can fit you into our schedule.

Q34: Can I bring a friend in to the treatment room with me?

Dr. David: Yes. No problem. You do not need to inform us of this decision in advance.

If you are accompanied by a friend or family, then we will often ask if you would like them to join you during treatment.

Q35: How often will I need treatment?

Dr. David: That will depend on the nature of your injury and how quickly you want the improvements.

Our aim is to return you to full fitness/function as quickly and as safely as possible.

Your Manual Therapist will be in a better position to answer this following your Discovery Visit (initial consultation).

Big Tip: Getting in early nearly always means less time to recover and less sessions needed.

Conclusion

So, there you have it: 35 questions answered that take you behind the scenes of a real live private Manual Physical Therapy practice.

You've just read the most common concerns, questions and myths that surround the industry.

I hope these answers have provided you with clarity, debunked any myths and put to bed any skepticism that may be stopping you from accessing a very valuable service – one that can quite literally change how active you are, and how healthy you look and feel - in your 40's, 50's, 60's and beyond.

I hope this is the beginning of a great, long-term relationship where El Paso Manual Physical Therapy can become the source of leading edge health advice for you and make a real difference to your life.

Your partner in healthcare,

Dr. David Middaugh, PT, DPT, FAAOMPT

Leading USA Physical Therapist

Fellowship Trained Manual Therapist



Health Advice Disclaimer

We make every effort to ensure that we accurately represent the injury advice and information displayed throughout this guide.

However, examples of injuries and their prognosis are based on typical representations of those injuries that we commonly see in our physical therapy practice. The information given is not intended as representations of every individual's potential injury. As with any injury, each person's symptoms can vary widely and each person's recovery from injury can also vary depending upon background, genetics, previous medical history, application of exercises, posture, motivation to follow advice and various other physical factors.

It is impossible to give a 100% complete accurate diagnosis and prognosis without a thorough physical examination and likewise the advice given for management of an injury cannot be deemed fully accurate in the absence of this examination from El Paso Manual Therapy, PLLC.

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