

Physical Therapy: A Safe Alternative to Opioids for Pain Management



No one wants to live in pain, but no one should put their health at risk in an effort to be pain free. Doctor-prescribed opioids are appropriate in some cases, but they just mask the pain - and opioid risks include [depression](#), [overdose](#), and [addiction](#), plus [withdrawal symptoms](#) when stopping use. That's why the CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) recommends safer alternatives like physical therapy to manage pain. Physical therapists treat pain through movement, hands-on care, and patient education - and by increasing physical activity you can also reduce your risk of other chronic diseases.

“Opioids help for the short term, and don’t address the underlying cause of the pain. When you stop opioids, you still have the underlying problem. With physical therapy, we address the cause of your pain and teach you how to control it, therefore you wouldn’t even need to start on opioids.”

- Joseph Bures, DPT

Prairie Rehabilitation

Why Physical Therapy for Pain Management?

- Physical therapists treat pain through movement.
- Physical therapy “side effects” include improved mobility, increased independence, decreased pain, and prevention of other health problems through movement and exercise.
- Physical therapy is effective for numerous conditions, and the CDC cited “high quality evidence” supporting exercise as part of physical therapist treatment for familiar conditions like low back pain, hip and knee [osteoarthritis](#), and [fibromyalgia](#).
- Opioids only mask the sensation of pain.
- Opioid side effects include depression, overdose, addiction, and withdrawal symptoms.
- Opioid effectiveness for long-term pain management is inconclusive in many cases.

Other Reasons to Choose Physical Therapy

- **Alternative to surgery:** Physical therapy has been found to be as effective as surgery for conditions including [meniscus tears](#), knee osteoarthritis and [rotator cuff tears](#).
- **Individualized treatment:** Physical therapist treatment plans are tailored to each person’s needs and goals, taking preexisting conditions into account.
- **Identification of potential risks:** Physical therapists can identify additional health issues beyond what the patient initially reports, thereby improving a person’s overall health and quality of life.

About Prairie Rehabilitation

At Prairie Rehabilitation our Physical Therapy, Occupational Therapy, Hand Therapy and Speech Therapy experts are passionate about helping our patients reclaim their way of life and function. It’s about you; you are unique with distinct qualities, abilities, and needs. At Prairie Rehabilitation we embrace the philosophy of “Patient First” care; treating each individual with precise and personalized care. To achieve the best results and to speed your recovery, we are committed to utilizing the most clinically proven and current concepts in rehabilitation.



About the Private Practice Section of the APTA

Founded in 1956, the Private Practice Section of the American Physical Therapy Association champions the success of physical therapist-owned businesses. Our members are leaders and innovators in the health care system. The American Physical Therapy Association (APTA) represents more than 85,000 physical therapists, physical therapist assistants and students of physical therapy nationwide. For more information, please visit www.ppsapta.org

For more information on pain management and the benefits of physical therapy, please visit the following websites:

- <https://www.moveforwardpt.com/Resources/Detail/how-physical-therapists-manage-pain>
- <https://www.moveforwardpt.com/choose-physical-therapy-over-opioids-for-pain-management-choosept>