



What is Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation?

Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation (PM&R) is one of the forty medical specialties recognized by the American Board of Medical Specialties (ABMS). The American Board of PM&R was approved by the ABMS in 1947. The specialty of PM&R began in the 1930s to address musculoskeletal and neurological problems and expanded after World War II due to the substantial numbers of debilitating war injuries and the polio epidemic. The field of PM&R, also known as physiatry, is dedicated to the diagnosis, prevention, and treatment of all types of disabilities related to the brain, nerves, bones and muscles in people of all ages.

Physiatrist (fizz-ee-at'trist)

Physiatrists are physicians (MD or DO degrees) who have completed 4 years of medical school and 4 years of residency training. Additional sub-specialty training can be pursued in areas such as pain management, spinal cord injury medicine, brain injury medicine, sports medicine, pediatric rehabilitation medicine, cancer rehabilitation, and hospice and palliative care.

Physiatrists Focus on Function

Physiatrists are unique among medical specialists in that not only do they diagnose and treat neurologic and musculoskeletal conditions, they routinely work with persons with disabilities to maximize the restoration of physical and cognitive function. The restored ability to move, speak, comprehend and access the world around them allows individuals with disabilities to return to independent living or work. Physiatrists commonly treat and restore function to people with:

- Acute and Chronic Pain
- Back & Neck Pain
- Cancer Pain
- Nerve Pain
- Sprains, Strains
- Muscle Pain
- Amputation
- Arthritis
- Sports-related Injury
- Brain Injury (including Concussion)
- Burn Injury
- Cancer
- COVID-19 Related Injuries (including Long COVID)
- Geriatric Disorders
- Heart Disorders
- Human Movement
- Muscle Spasticity
- Nerve Injury & Disorders
- Pediatric Disorders
- Post-polio Syndrome
- Stroke
- Spinal cord Injury
- Tendons
- Transplant Recovery
- Work-related Injury

Where do Physiatrists Work?

- Rehabilitation Centers (i.e., inpatient rehabilitation facilities, long term acute care hospitals, skilled nursing facilities)
- Acute Care Hospitals
- Veteran's Affairs Hospitals
- Private Offices
- Outpatient Clinics

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