

# Telehealth May be an Option During COVID-19 Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic seems to have stopped much of the world. Once busy streets and shops are empty, activities are cancelled and you may not even be going to work. One thing that the virus has not stopped is pain and injury. Maybe you were seeing your PT when stay at home orders were issued. Maybe you've been having more pain and soreness in your back or neck because of all the time you've spent in front of the computer working at home, or maybe you hurt yourself over the weekend doing some yard work or exercising to relieve stress. How do you get the care you need without putting yourself or others at risk during this time of social distancing?

## Telehealth

Technology like the internet, electronic medical records, online patient portals, smartphones and webcams open up treatment and intervention options that may be new to both you and your provider. Virtual platforms allow one-on-one interactions in real time. Patient portals allow uploads and updates of home exercise programs and educational materials. You may not be able to go to your PT, but your PT may be able to come virtually to you! Rules and regulations vary from state to state, and insurer to insurer. They are also being rapidly updated and changed to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, so the best way to find out what is available to you is to contact your physical therapist and ask!

## Virtual Visit Tips

- You'll need a device with a screen, camera and microphone. This could be a smartphone, tablet, or computer
- You may need a specific app - your therapist will tell you what you need and where to find it
- Choose a private space where you feel comfortable to conduct your visit. Make sure you have room to move, this is still a PT visit and movement is the whole point!
- Wear clothes that you can move in, and that your PT can see you move in. Very loose, baggy clothing makes it hard for your PT to see and evaluate your movement
- Collect any equipment you may have beforehand, so your PT knows what you have to work with. Examples might include resistance bands, foam rollers, yoga mats and blocks, etc.
- Be ready to get creative and have fun! For many patients and therapists, televisits are a new experience so expect to work together and try new things to find what works best for you.