

There are different types of physical therapy documentation employed by [physical therapists](#). This include the initial evaluation, physical therapy notes or progress notes, reevaluation or reexamination documentation, and discharge notes or physical therapy discharge summary.

The Initial Evaluation

The initial evaluation (IE), also called initial examination, is a documentation used by physical therapists during the first encounter of the patient or client.

In general, the IE is the most comprehensive documentation in physical therapy. It includes general data of the patient; history of present illness and other pertinent data; systems review; tests and measurements; physical therapy diagnosis; physical therapy assessment and prognosis including goals (short and long-term goals); and plan of care.

This documentation employs the [SOAP format](#). SOAP stands for subjective, objective, assessment, and plan. For more information, visit "[Physical Therapy Initial Evaluation Basics](#)."

Daily PT Notes or Progress Notes

Each succeeding encounter with the patient is documented in the form of PT notes or progress notes. It follows the [SOAP format](#) of documentation. If the IE involves comprehensive information, the daily notes is the much shorter form.

More information on:

- [Physical Therapy Notes](#) and what can be found on the body of a PT Note
- [Sample Physical Therapy Notes](#)

Physical Therapy Reevaluation or Reexamination

This physical therapy documentation is almost the same as the initial evaluation. However, some informations are left out depending on what is required by the institution where the physical therapist works. In physical therapy reevaluation, documentation of selected components of the IE will be entered. The purpose of this is to update patient's functioning including disability status. Also, interpretation of findings may be included, as well as revision or setting of new goals will be included whenever necessary.

Discharge Notes/Discontinuation Summary

This documentation is issued at the time of patient discharge from the hospital or when patient has reached normal function. Prior to discharge or discontinuation from therapy, a reevaluation is done to see the current status of the patient upon discharge.

The physical therapy discharge summary include (but not limited to) the patient's current functional status; goals that were achieved with therapy and reasons for not achieving the other goals if any; and plan after discharge including home exercise program, recommendations for follow-up, referrals for other services if required, and interventions made.

As always, in any type of medical documentation, complete name, designation and signature of the physical therapist should be included.

Suggested Readings:

- [Physical Therapy Initial Evaluation](#)
- [Writing Physical Therapy SOAP Notes \(PT Notes\) Basics](#)
- [Physical Therapy Documentation - PT SOAP Notes](#)
- [Physical Therapy Notes Writing Guidelines](#)
- [Parts of the Physical Therapy SOAP Notes](#)
- [Sample Physical Therapy SOAP Note](#)

The physical therapy notes (PT Notes) is a particular format of recording information employed by physical therapists. Most PT notes are written in the S.O.A.P note format, which stands for **S**ubjective, **O**bjective, **A**ssessment and **P**lan. It is a record of the progress of the patient, which is included in his or her patient chart.

SOAP Notes Parts

Subjective

The information contained in the subjective part of the PT note includes what the patients says about his or her condition or problem. It can be in the form of a quote from the patient's statement, for example, "My back is so painful, especially after sitting for many hours at work."

It is better to look for subjective information that is more specific, such as "My back pain has reduced from 10 to 6." Or it can be stated as "Patient states that his back pain has reduced from pain level of 10 to 6."

It is important that in this section, the subjective information should be related to the patient's condition, progress in rehabilitation, functional mobility or quality of life. Other irrelevant information should be excluded, such as "Brittney's bald again."

Objective

This section of the PT note is where concrete measurements, such as blood pressure and range of motion and treatment interventions performed are recorded. This section should include specific treatments. It should also include the frequency, duration and equipment used.

The objective section should be specific enough so that in case the therapist is not available, another therapist can treat the patient.

Assessment

This is where the impression of the physical therapist is recorded regarding the patient's

performance during the treatment procedure. "The patient tolerated the treatment well" statement is commonly used, but it's not telling whether or not the client is progressing throughout the overall treatment plan.

Plan

This is the final section of the physical therapy note. It is where the physical therapists would outline the course of treatment after considering the information he or she has gathered during the treatment session. If the therapist would like to continue treatment following the original plan of the care, the PT might just say "Continue with current plan."

Writing physical therapy SOAP notes is an invaluable documentation that every [physical therapy](#) student should learn. Students learning how to write SOAP notes also need to learn how to write [physical therapy abbreviations](#). Some of these basic abbreviations are enumerated at our [PT Abbreviations Page](#).

Related Article:

[Sample Physical Therapy SOAP Notes](#)

View More Topics About:

[Conditions / Injuries](#) | [Physical Therapy](#) | [Health and Wellness](#)

References:

Guidelines: Physical Therapy Documentation of Patient/Client Management. American Physical Therapy Association (APTA) from http://www.apta.org/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Policies_and_Bylaws&TEMPLATE=/CM/ContentDisplay.cfm&CONTENTID=31688. Accessed June 24, 2010.

Karen McComas (n.d.). DAILY PROGRESS NOTES: SOAP Note Format from <http://people.ehe.ohio-state.edu> (pdf format). Accessed June 24, 2010

What are Physical Therapists?

Physical therapists, or PTs, are health care professionals that are licensed to provide physical therapy services. They are experts in how the body moves and are trained to evaluate and treat people who have movement disabilities and inabilities to perform daily tasks due to an injury or illness.

- [What is a Physical Therapist?](#)
- [How to Find a Physical Therapist](#)

Physical Therapy Treatments

There are many treatment options used in physical therapy. What is effective for one patient may not be equally effective for you. This is why your therapist needs to conduct a

thorough examination, which will guide him or her in creating a specific treatment plan tailored to your needs and goals. Common physical therapy treatment options include:

- [physical therapy exercises](#) (e.g. [range of motions exercises](#)) and manual therapy (e.g. massage, mobilization techniques)
- functional training
- assistive and adaptive device training (e.g. cane, crutch, walker training)
- physical agents like hot and cold packs and electrotherapeutic modalities such as ultrasound (US) and TENS (Transcutaneous Electrical Nerve Stimulator)
 - [Conditions and PT Treatment Options](#)

Physical Therapy Education

Physical therapists must have a graduate degree before they are eligible to take the national licensure examination. Most physical therapy schools and universities in the United States offer the doctor of physical therapy (DPT) degree. Some, however, still offer the master's degree, which is the minimum educational requirement.

- [Physical Therapy Education and Training](#)
- [Physical Therapy Programs](#)
- [Physical Therapy Degrees Offered by Schools and Universities](#)
- [Physical Therapy Documentation](#)

Where is Physical Therapy practiced?

Most physical therapy practitioners work in hospitals, outpatient rehabilitation centers, and private clinics. Others work in school rehabilitation clinics, nursing care facilities, and in offices of other health care practitioners.

- [Where do Physical Therapists Work?](#)

When do you need Physical Therapy?

You will need physical therapy if you have problems with movement that keeps you from doing your daily activities. Some of the most common reasons where physical therapy is needed include back and neck pain, arthritis (e.g. Osteoarthritis, Rheumatoid Arthritis), [sprains and strains](#), problems with [balance](#), [stroke](#), injuries related to work and sports, among others.

- [Why do I Need Physical Therapy?](#)

Health Insurance and Doctor Referral

Most health insurance cover physical therapy services. In most US states, a doctor referral is not necessary to consult a physical therapist.

[Employment for physical therapists](#) is projected to be one of the most demanded jobs now and in the future because of the increasing life-expectancy and increase in the number of baby-boomers. In addition, there might be shortages of physical therapists as some PTs have several other PT jobs in addition to their regular physical therapy job.

Furthermore, there are many options where physical therapists can work. They can be employed in hospitals, clinics, nursing homes, schools, rehabilitation centers, sports centers, academe, research and many more.

Physical Therapy Job Web Sites

Here are some of the websites that have posts on physical therapy jobs if you are looking for PT jobs online. Job sites are arranged in alphabetical order and not according to top physical therapy job site.

[American Physical Therapy Association \(APTA\) Career Center](#) - A good resource center for physical therapy job seekers in the United States. APTA is the leading organization on physical therapy that oversees PT profession in the US.

[PTJobs.com](#) - Offers a wide array of physical therapy jobs in the US. They have an option wherein you can upload your resume.

[SimplyHired.ca](#) - Provides a job-search for physical therapy jobs and other occupations when you want to search for jobs in Canada or other parts of the globe.

[UKTherapist.co.uk](#) - An internet job board for physical therapy and other allied health professional occupations.

If you or the company you represent would like your physical therapy job site to be included here, please mail the webmaster at [webmaster@\[.\]physicaltherapynotes\[.\]com](mailto:webmaster@[.]physicaltherapynotes[.]com). At present, this is provided for free. Take note, however, that we only accept a link to the official PT job offering website and not individual job postings. Thank you!

Note: We are not responsible for the job listings in these PT job sites. Links provided here are for informational purposes only and does not mean an endorsement of these sites by the Physical Therapy Notes website.