



Telehealth PT and Reimbursement FAQ

What is “Tele-PT”?

Simply put, “Tele-PT (‘‘telehealth physical therapy’’ or ‘‘virtual physical therapy’’) refers to physical therapy services that are provided over a technology platform, such as a video conference or multi-media call, rather than by in-person means. This service is delivered using a video call platform and requires that both parties have access to a computer or iPad type device with a microphone and camera. If this is not possible, some limited support may be provided by phone. Please talk with your PT about whether this is appropriate for your specific condition or treatment.

How is Physical Therapy provided over the phone?

While we still believe there is no substitute for ‘‘hands-on’’ treatment in the office, some support can be provided over the phone to patients who are not able to come into the clinic. Using Telehealth technology, your PT can actually see you and talk with you just as they would in the office. During your session, your PT can evaluate functional performance, provide instructions for exercises, and observe your movement and range of motion – particularly if only the upper body is involved. If your treatment is for the back or lower body and legs, this is not as easy to assess, but you may experience some benefit from meeting with your PT. This service is not for everyone, so please talk to your PT about whether Tele-PT is appropriate for your specific condition or treatment.

How much does a Tele-PT visit cost?

Like our in-office services, the cost of a Tele-PT visit may vary depending on the services performed, time spent, and your insurance carrier’s coverage (if any) for the service. If not covered by your insurance, Body One is currently offering Tele-PT consultations to existing patients for \$35.00 per visit up to 15 minutes. Calls over 15 minutes and New Patient appointments are subject to additional charges. This is a cash-based service and patients should plan to pay using a credit card over the phone at the time of the appointment.

Is Tele-PT covered by my insurance?

On April 30th of 2020, Medicare announced they would reimburse for PT visits via Telehealth in response to the pandemic. Many other commercial plans also provide coverage but rules vary by employer. Patients who elect to have Tele-PT billed to insurance may do so but remain responsible for the charges. We are happy to bill your insurance and assist you to recover all or a portion of your pre-payment if your insurance has made the decision to cover this service. You will be balance-billed for any amount the insurance does not pay, but not more than our self-pay rate. If you and your PT agree that you will benefit from a Tele-PT visit, you should plan to pay for your first visit using a credit card at the time of your appointment. After we hear from your insurance company and confirm coverage, we may change this. We are not able to guarantee coverage or call to verify coverage on every patient. This is your responsibility.

Will Tele-PT visits count toward my Annual Max (or Authorized Visits)?

Yes – if billed to insurance. Most insurance companies are requiring that we use the same billing codes we would use for in-office visits. They would, therefore, be counted the same. To understand if you have an annual visit max, and how these will be counted by your insurance company, please contact them directly. If you elect not to have your insurance billed, the Tele-PT visits will not be counted toward

an Annual visit max or Authorized visit max. The recommended frequency of any Tele-PT visits should be discussed with your PT.

How long will my Tele-PT visit last?

The length of your appointment will vary depending on your condition, your treatment and the extent to which you and your therapist can effectively manage your care through a video call. Tele-PT visits normally last 10-20 minutes. As soon as you are able, you should return to your normal routine and resume PT in the office.

How do I access my Tele-PT visit?

You must have an active email address. On the day of your appointment, your PT will email you a link to join your visit at the scheduled time.

Can I get all my PT through Tele-PT and stop coming into the office?

No. We strongly believe that an important part of effective PT is to have direct, in-person interaction with your Physical Therapist. This may include hands-on muscle testing, manual range of motion, resistance training, dry needling or many other manual interventions that are not possible over the phone. We are happy to be able to offer Tele-PT to our patients who are temporarily home-bound, but we do not view this as a good long-term solution. If you have a long term need for in-home PT, please talk to your physician or therapist about a home therapy provider.

At this time, our office is still open to provide essential healthcare services to our patients. We are taking all necessary precautions to ensure a safe – socially distanced – experience for you and for our employees. While we cannot provide any guarantees, an in-office visit is still available for those who need it. A mixture of in-office and Tele-PT may be right for you.

Is this Video Conference Private/Secure?

At this time, Body One is using a third-party teleconferencing service – ZOOM. Employees of that third party will have access to your email and any personal data that YOU enter into the system when joining the conference. Required information is limited to first name and email. Body One will provide them with NO patient data. The verbal discussion and images that are exchanged during the video conference are as secure as your normal home internet and/or phone service.

To be clear, the video conference platform used DOES NOT meet all of the requirements of federal HIPAA privacy and security regulations. This is a known security risk. We are offering this technology as an alternative to face-to-face visits for patient who believe they are at risk during the COVID-19 crisis. We will use this service only when the patient AND the therapist believe the benefits outweigh the risks. We have educated our therapists on the risks of this technology and actively discourage the exchange of **sensitive** personal data during your PT session. If you are not comfortable, or if you become uncomfortable at any time during your session, please disconnect.

Thank you for asking questions. We want you to be informed. If you have further questions or concerns, please contact our office at the number listed below.

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