

Physical Therapists and Dentists Both Deserve a Prominent Spot on Your Calendar

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Keeping your teeth healthy is important, in fact, the American Dental Association recommends regular dental visits to maintain optimal oral health. Our parents, school nurses and pediatricians have reinforced the importance of dental health from a young age, but what about our musculoskeletal systems? Isn't it time we considered the benefits of inking annual appointments with a specialist who focuses her attention on your bones, joints and muscles?

The fact is that apart from an injury or other ailment needing immediate attention for four to six weeks, physical therapy doesn't play a prominent role in most people's regular healthcare routine. Members of the Private Practice Section of the American Physical Therapy Association are hoping to change that. What if Americans thought of their physical therapists when making their annual and semi-annual rounds to dentists, primary care physicians and specialty physicians such as dermatologists?

It's true that physical therapists are highly skilled in methods that improve mobility and reduce pain following an injury, but they can also play a key role in the patient's health once therapy has ended. In fact, the standard practice of care recommends that patients schedule a follow-up visit on an annual basis, at a minimum. Physical therapists are trained to teach patients how to incorporate exercises and lifestyle changes that prevent re-injury and improve overall health and well-being.

Much like treating a cavity early can help prevent the much-dreaded root canal, identifying the early indications of postural issues can steer patients clear of unnecessary pain and disability down the line. People tend to respect their dentists' guidance and try to adhere to the recommendations they make. Similarly, the right physical therapist can ensure you have the knowledge and tools you need to live a safe and active lifestyle.

About the Private Practice Section of the American Physical Therapy Association

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.

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