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PADDY JARIT PT, SCS, ATC
Sport & Orthopaedic
Physical Therapy

Implementing Telehealth in Your Clinic

COMPANY: Sport & Orthopaedic Physical Therapy

SPECIALTIES: Outpatient Rehabilitation, Sports Medicine, Women's Health

LOCATION: Trumbull, Connecticut

THE CHALLENGE

Telehealth is not a new concept to the healthcare industry. In fact, some medical providers have been administering telehealth visits for years. But when the COVID-19 pandemic arose and states began mandating social distancing rules, Sport & Orthopaedic Physical Therapy in Connecticut found themselves needing a new way to treat patients - and fast. Without the ability to hold in-clinic visits full-time, therapist and practice owner, Paddy Jarit, was faced with the task to find alternate treatment options to support their patients and guide them to a full recovery.

THE APPROACH

In response to the pandemic, Jarit closed his clinics, researched his options, and launched his telehealth program in just four days. To be effective in providing virtual care, the most important part of launching a successful telehealth program is the relentless focus on the relationship between patient and provider. Jarit comments, "even though the interaction is virtual, the relationship must be personal." Using a telehealth technology, the Insight platform and a clinical process followed by his entire staff, Jarit has been able to successfully initiate a telehealth program.

THE PROCESS

- 1** Schedule each patient for 45 minutes with a five-minute window in between appointments.

Tip: Use two monitors during a virtual visit – one for documentation, the other for patient interaction.
- 2** Provide patients with step-by-step instructions on how to prepare for their virtual therapy session.

Tip: Include directions on how to test audio and video settings prior to the session.
- 3** Require patients to sign and return a consent form before the appointment.

Tip: If the patient doesn't have a scanner, a cell phone photo of the consent form works just as well.
- 4** Use a virtual "waiting room" so staff can acknowledge the patient has arrived just like they would in the front office.

Tip: Most all teleconferencing platforms offer a waiting room feature.
- 5** Follow up each virtual visit with a Telehealth Playlist on your Facebook or YouTube channel.

Tip: Use the videos to coach patients on how to complete their exercises from the safety of their own home.



THE RESULTS

Overall, in their short experience with telehealth, Jarit and the entire team at Sport & Orthopaedic Physical Therapy are each effectively treating patients virtually and have experienced a high level of receptiveness and appreciation from their patients. Jarit notes, “patients have more than welcomed me into their homes through telehealth. The most common comment has been that they’re thankful that I can watch them do their exercises at home while fine tuning their technique.” Although our country is still enduring the pandemic, with the help of telehealth, Sport & Orthopaedic PT successfully arrived 217 patients in the month of April, which is nearly in line with their January numbers pre-telehealth of 235 patients. To his credit, Jarit has taken time to share his telehealth experiences with the rest of the outpatient rehabilitation community. As an active participant in Clinicient’s COVID-19 Town Halls, Jarit has been a consistent and generous contributor to the telehealth conversations. Although crisis invites change, as an industry, we’re learning as we go and sticking together in the process.

THE FUTURE

Telehealth may be a relatively new concept to the physical therapy space, but it doesn’t appear to be going anywhere even after COVID-19. Post outbreak, 90% of hospitals expect greater use of telehealth to persist. Clinics like Sport & Orthopaedic Physical Therapy have embraced telehealth in a very short time and will only become more skilled at delivering effective virtual care over time. Jarit adds, “if the insurance industry realizes the value of telehealth physical therapy I undoubtedly see this as an adjunct to my in-clinic physical therapy.” Patients don’t have to lose their momentum towards a full recovery just because there’s a pandemic and providers can continue to be effective in their care without face-to-face interaction. Telehealth is here to stay and will continue to transform the outpatient rehabilitation industry.

¹ The Impact of COVID-19 on US Hospitals – Edition 5; L.E.K Consulting, April 29, 2020. www.lek.com/insights/impact-covid-19-us-hospitals-edition-5

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