

Physical Therapy and MSA

Every step of the way

Erica A. Pitsch, PT, DPT
Board-Certified Neurologic Clinical Specialist
Clinical Professor, UCSF



Outline

- What is physical therapy?
- How can physical therapy help with MSA?
- Specific strategies to stay safe and stay active
- The “dental model”

What is physical therapy?

- Physical Therapists are licensed health care professionals that specialize in **movement**
- Doctorate (DPT) as of 2016
- Most states have direct access to physical therapy
- Insurance companies (like Medicare) requires referral



Physical Therapy , Occupational Therapy, Speech Therapy: What's the difference?

- PTs help you get from point A to point B
- OTs help you be independent with activities of daily living
- SLPs help you express yourself and swallow safely



Why Rehab?



Prevent



Compensate



Short term improve?
Long term preserve?

What happens with rehab?

Individualized
assessment

Standardized
tests

Assess fall
risk

Prescribe
individualized
exercise

Trial assistive
devices

teach **habits**
for everyday
movement

How can physical therapy help with MSA?

Universal truths and some particulars



- Everyone needs cardiovascular exercise
- Everyone loses strength as we age
- Specificity : practice what you need to do
- Difficulty: Struggle, Satisfaction, Safety

How can physical therapy help with MSA?

Neurogenic Orthostatic Hypotension

- A significant drop in blood pressure after changing position
- Habit- slow down and pause between lying, sitting, and standing
- Try- exercises to raise blood pressure
 - Clench toes, thighs, buttocks, abdominal all at once in rhythmic fashion
 - Press arms up and down above head
 - Key features: keep breathing, keep moving
- Caution! Some positions recommended online are NOT SAFE for someone with a balance problem!

How can physical therapy help with MSA?

Universal truths and some particulars



Images brought to you by DALL-E

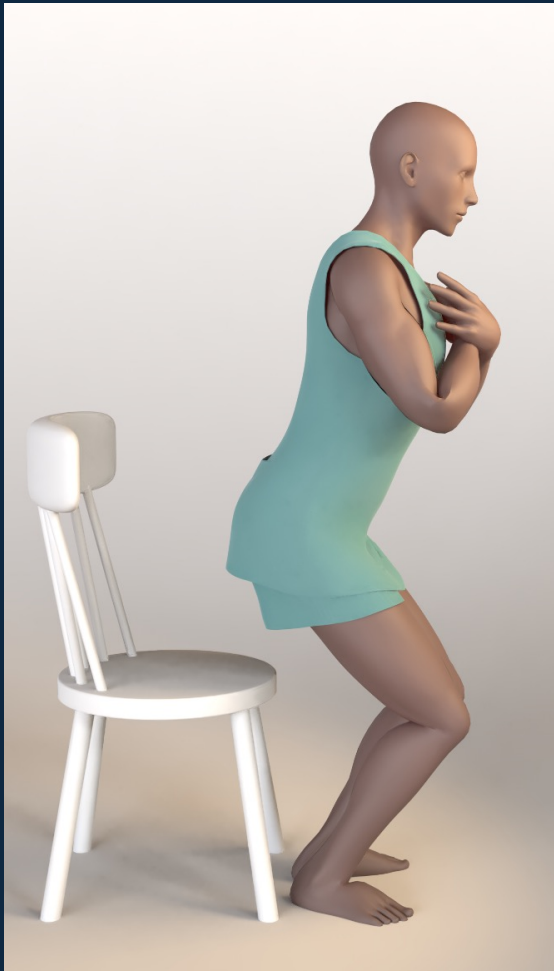
- MSA-P

- Slowness: Rhythmic Auditory Cueing, External Focus*
example: Marching with music
- Stiffness: Stretching as sustenance



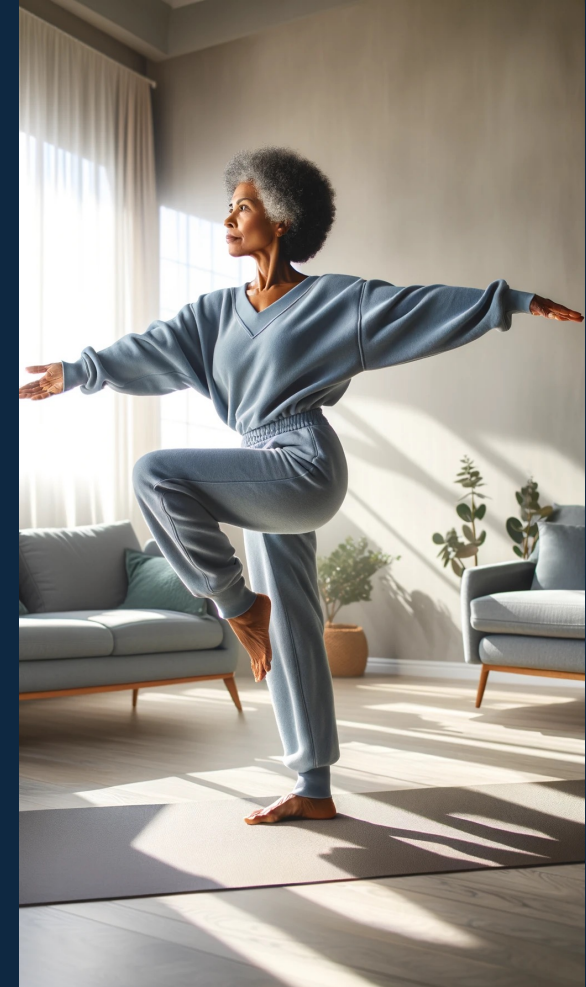
How can physical therapy help with MSA?

Universal truths and some particulars



Extremely functional!

- MSA-C (Ataxia)
 - Focus on **Function**
 - Not frustration
 - Float, don't force



Too difficult!

Why PT

Prevention and Maintenance

- Help overcome barriers to physical activity
- Help find the best exercise that works for you
- Check ups every few months to years depending on progression

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Example: Slow, easy stroll for someone who can walk fast without a device

- Cardiovascular exercise / endurance
- Resistance training
- ✓ Task Specific Training
- ✓ Balance training

Bonus:

nature, **social support**



Example: Slow stroll for someone who just got out of the hospital and can walk across their house

- ✓ Cardiovascular exercise / endurance
- Resistance training
- ✓ Task Specific Training
- ✓ Balance training



May need more caregiver support and equipment at home

Example: Weight training on seated exercise machines

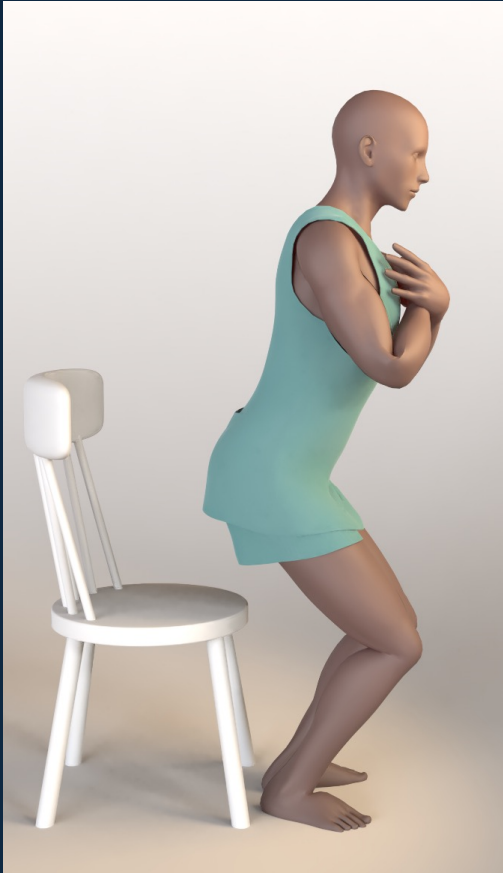
- Cardiovascular exercise / endurance
- Resistance training
- Task Specific Training
- Balance training

And a safe alternative to free weights!



Image by [Welcome to All!](#) from [Pixabay](#)

Example: Functional practice with sit to stands, lunges, getting up from floor



- Cardiovascular exercise / endurance (maybe)
- ✓ Balance training
- ✓ Resistance training
- ✓ Task Specific Training

Example: Tai Chi

- Cardiovascular exercise / endurance
 - Resistance training
 - ✓ Task Specific Training
 - ✓ Balance training
- PLUS
- Coordination, learning, social connection, floating not forcing



Example: Boxing

- ✓ Cardiovascular exercise / endurance
- ☐ Resistance training
- ✓ Task Specific Training
- ✓ Balance training

PLUS

Speed, coordination, learning, social connection, external focus



Example: Dancing



✓ Cardiovascular exercise / endurance

☐ Resistance training

✓ Task Specific Training

✓ Balance training

PLUS

Speed, coordination,
learning, social connection,
music and rhythm

Start where you are

Getting started

- Move more, sit less
 - Before getting out of bed, move and stretch
 - Stand up and sit down 10x between Netflix episodes
 - Take a lap or 2 around your home after getting up to use the bathroom
 - Stand tall and clench your legs 1 x every second while using the microwave
 - Play tug of war with the dog while sitting
 - Play a bean bag toss (grandkids not required)

Start where you are

More advanced

- Group classes
 - YouTube “sit and be fit”
 - www.borp.org for online classes
 - Local senior centers for group classes
 - PD-specific programs
- Track your activity and intensity
 - Step trackers
 - Heart rate monitors
 - “health” app on the iphone

The “dental model”



Make a plan

- Work on an exercise program with your that works for you
- Get outside help to continue with the program after PT
- Talk to your PT about coming back in for a checkup in 6 months
 - Are the exercises too easy or too hard?
 - Are you having near falls or falling more often?
 - is it time to try a walker?
 - www.choosept.com Search for “neurologic clinical specialist”

Thank you!

UCSF

University of California
San Francisco

