

Therapy and Scleroderma

Helpful Tips When Searching for an Occupational or Physical Therapist

Finding the right occupational and physical therapist can be a challenge as many are not familiar with the diagnosis of scleroderma. While therapists may be competent in many other areas they may have never seen a patient with scleroderma.

Tip #1: Ask how many patients with scleroderma they have treated?

Tip #2: Ask what they know about the disease and how it progresses?

Tip #3: Therapists that are Certified Hand Therapists (CHT's) have additional training and may be helpful in the prevention of hand deformities. Locate a therapist in your area by going to www.htcc.org . If you find a therapist you like but they have limited experience with scleroderma, bring them information about scleroderma or refer them to the Scleroderma Foundation Website.

Tip #4: Contact your local Scleroderma Chapter, and inquire about resources. Attend meetings where you can meet other members, and get recommendations for a therapist in your area.

Tip #5: When requesting an order from your physician it should specify either Occupational or Physical therapy evaluation and treatment. Generally speaking occupational therapists will work on the prevention of hand and upper extremity deformities, self-care and work activities, and assistive devices. Physical therapy focus will be on mobility issues and regaining motion and strength of the extremities.

Tip #6: Contact your insurance company to verify benefit coverage for therapy prior to scheduling appointments. See Insurance Tips Resource.