

Therapeutic Exercise -- A Tool in the Management of Clinicopathological Entities

R. Vincent Davis, DC, PT, DNBPM

Therapeutic exercise (TE) is exercise applied in a therapeutic manner with the goal of restoring or improving a patient's physiological well-being. It is one of the key tools used to restore and improve a patient's neuromusculoskeletal or cardiopulmonary well-being. The ultimate achievement of any therapeutic exercise program is symptom free movement and/or function. In fairness, it is mentioned that much controversy surrounds the scientific efficacy of pulmonary, postural drainage procedures.

Accurate diagnosis is the hallmark upon which any program of therapeutic exercise is based, and without it the program results will probably range from poorly effective to ineffective; and under certain circumstances, it may even be detrimental to the patient.

Hopefully, the reader is already aware of the fact that therapeutic exercise is only another modality, or another therapeutic tool for use in the treatment of the clinicopathological processes.

When properly administered, it may be used to assist the body in the removal of inspissated mucus secretions from the pulmonary system by cupped percussion postural drainage, or enhance the cardiopulmonary functions by the performance of aerobic exercises. Body joints may be treated by range of motion exercises to enhance joint function and improve muscular performance.

To properly understand and administer therapeutic exercise, a background in human anatomy, physiology, medical kinesiology, postural evaluation, goniometric measurements, manual muscle testing, and basic orthopedic evaluation are necessary.

The goals of TE involve positive effects which include the prevention of dysfunction. They also include the development, improvement, restoration or maintenance of normal muscle strength, endurance and cardiovascular fitness, mobility and flexibility, and relaxation, as well as motor coordination and skill.

This modality will be recommended for implementation whenever appropriate for the clinicopathology being scrutinized. For specific information regarding the clinical application of TE, the reader is referred to an appropriate text.

References

Delome & Waters: Progressive Resistance Exercises. Appleton/Century, New York, 1951.

Kisner and Colby: Therapeutic Exercise: Foundation and Techniques, ed 2. F.A. Davis Publishers.

Knutgren HC: Neuromuscular Mechanism for Therapeutic and Conditioning Exercises. University Park Press, Baltimore, 1976.

R. Vincent Davis, D.C., BSPT, DNBPME

