

# How to Find a Physical Therapist Skilled in Treating People with Vestibular Disorders

Author: Susan L. Whitney, PT, PhD, DPT, NCS, FAPTA

## Fact Sheet

All physical therapists receive baseline education on how to treat people with balance and vestibular problems. Some physical therapists, however, have advanced skills and knowledge in the area of vestibular rehabilitation. These talented therapists can be found in specialty outpatient clinics, in orthopedic outpatient practice, and within inpatient facilities. Advanced training differentiates these clinicians from their peers. Vestibular physical therapists often attend competency-based coursework to advance their knowledge. In addition, many have taken a standardized national examination to recognize their advanced skills in neurology, including the knowledge of balance and vestibular dysfunction. Those who have successfully passed the American Board of Physical Therapy Specialties exam in neurology use the designation “Neurologic Clinical Specialist” (NCS) after their name.

### Produced by



### A Special Interest Group of



#### Contact us:

ANPT  
5841 Cedar Lake Rd S.  
Ste 204  
Minneapolis, MN 55416  
Phone: 952.646.2038  
Fax: 952.545.6073  
info@neuropt.org  
www.neuropt.org

a component of



When making a referral for physical therapy, it is important to determine if the clinic has the necessary experience and equipment to treat balance and vestibular disorders. Key questions to ask include:

- What percentage of the patient population consists of persons with balance and vestibular dysfunction?
- Has the therapist taken any advanced coursework in vestibular rehabilitation?
- Do you have educational materials available to help patients understand their vestibular disorder?

Because advanced training is strongly recommended when treating balance and vestibular disorders, remember to refer to a specific physical therapist when you refer your patient to a clinic for care. Remind your patient to request this therapist by name when scheduling their visit with the office staff, so that they receive the necessary care and expertise.

A list of physical therapists who report experience in treating vestibular disorders can be found at [http://www.neuropt.org/map\\_Vestibular/map.html](http://www.neuropt.org/map_Vestibular/map.html).