Occupational therapy for everyday activities

Choose a task you want to do more easily, like putting on a coat or preparing breakfast. An occupational therapist can watch you try it and help you work on the part that gets difficult.

When you're healthy, it's easy to take for granted the little things you do every day, like simply getting out of bed, taking care of our daily needs and getting dressed. However, many people recovering from a serious injury or illness – such as after suffering brain damage from a stroke – are faced with having to re-learn all the activities they might normally do in their daily life.

The loss of mobility and fine motor skills often accompanies serious illness and traumatic injury.

In situations like these, occupational therapy is an essential part of recovery. Occupational therapists focus on helping people move toward regaining their independence, starting from what their current abilities are and what phase of recovery they are in.

An occupational therapist might help you with:

- Detailing the healing process and what you should expect
- Improving how you complete daily activities such as self-care, child or pet care, driving, meal preparation or taking medication
- Teaching you the best ways to get in and out of bed or lay down
- Adapting your personal hygiene routine, including: bathing, toileting, dressing and eating
- Outlining ways to prevent and avoid injuries

Many people confuse occupational therapy with physical therapy, but the differences are significant. Occupational therapy focuses on helping a person adapt their daily routine so they can perform life skills as easily as possible, rather than directly treating a specific injury. Physical therapy focuses on an injury or person's ability to perform movement in general.

You can expect different things from occupational therapy based on where you receive it. For example:

- In an inpatient setting, such as a long-term acute care hospital or inpatient rehabilitation hospital, the therapist will focus on helping you make gradual improvement toward your recovery goal after a serious injury or illness. They work closely with physical and speech therapy teams to support the overall plan.
- In a home care setting, an occupational therapist helps you transition back into your daily life, such as improving your ability to get around the house, teaching you how to use assistive devices, meal preparation and clean up, assessing any risk areas of your home that might cause a fall or re-injury or administering medication.

There are also differences in what each occupational therapist could provide in each setting. Some therapists may have additional training so they can provide focused therapies, such as adapting to life after amputation or overcoming permanent brain damage after an event like a stroke.

Occupational therapy is part of Lakeview's rehabilitation services and is also offered through the Waterford outpatient clinic. Bring an everyday task you want to regain and ask how the therapist can assess it.

For questions about a possible stay, call Lakeview Admissions at (262) 534-8509. During a stay, ask the bedside nurse who can help with your question.

https://www.lakeviewsystem.com/inpatient-rehabilitation