

**Birmingham Physical Therapy and Sports Medicine**  
**Summer 2013 Internship Reflection**  
**By: Grant Goodson**

If you find yourself interested in injuries to the body, helping others, and being active then I highly recommend this six week physical therapy assistant internship. Birmingham Physical Therapy and Sports Medicine is an out-patient clinic, meaning they treat patients of all ages who have recently undergone surgery. However, patients can also attend the clinic for exercise of weak muscles, treatment of pain and even to work on proper walking gait and balance.

As an intern, you will be expected to perform many duties, although you are not allowed to directly treat patients on your own. Every patient has a chart with stretches and exercises specifically designed for them by the therapist to rehabilitate their injury or weakness. Your job is to assist the therapist in each patient's exercise program by actually taking the patient through the program of exercises and stretches. This is not limited to, but can include using therabands to target specific muscle strengthening, demonstrating proper form and technique of exercises, providing ice and heat packs to patients, setting up patients on cervical and lumbar traction machines, performing ultrasound, and attaching patients to electrical stimulation (E-stim) machines. Other tasks you will be responsible for include cleaning tables and exercise equipment after each patient's appointment, washing and folding laundry and scheduling patient's appointments at the front desk, even occasionally answering the phone. It is important to remember that no two patients are alike and there is a lot of variability in range of motion, strength, and cardio of patients, so it is essential to pay attention to every movement and function of the patient throughout the rehabilitation process in order to properly benefit them. In order to get the most out of this internship I would

recommend that you have a good understanding of human anatomy because everything you do is based on movements and functions of the body.

A typical work day is very active and requires good people skills. You will be moving around the clinic all day assisting all therapists and working with multiple patients. The clinic's exercise area is in a large open room, which I enjoyed because it creates a fun and energetic atmosphere enabling the therapists and patients to interact with one another. There are six therapists in the clinic and they are all wonderful people and truly enjoy teaching you the field of physical therapy. You will work with all of the therapists and are able to form great relationships with all of your coworkers and even some patients.

Lastly, being able to work with Ellen Hamilton, a Sewanee alumni and owner of Birmingham Physical Therapy and Sports Medicine, was an absolutely amazing experience. Her passion and knowledge for physical therapy is bar none and I am very grateful to have had the opportunity to learn from the best. She has received many honors and praises in the Birmingham area and her friendly, hard working personality highlights why she has been so successful. Ellen is a great person to get to know and be associated with going forward. I had an unbelievable experience with this internship and it has solidified my decision to pursue a career in physical therapy. With that being said, if you have any thoughts or interests in the field of physical therapy this is certainly an opportunity in which to take full advantage.

Best of luck,

Grant Goodson C'15