



» PATIENT SUCCESS STORY

Telerehab Exceeds Patient Expectation

While most patients have heard about telemedicine and can easily see the benefits of getting answers from physicians via video-conferencing, what is a bit more difficult to grasp is how telemedicine can be applied to physical therapy—a medical service that is typically considered very hands-on.

In fact, when asked, patients often have a hard time envisioning how physical therapy could possibly be delivered remotely.



So we asked Katie Price, one of our patients, if she would be willing to share her story to help other injured workers better understand what telerehabilitation is all about.

» KATIE'S STORY

After working for several months in a warehouse where she lifted heavy boxes, Katie Price noticed her hands were extremely sore. The 22-year-old thought she would get used to the work and the soreness would go away, but it did not. Instead she also began to experience numbness in her hands.

She was diagnosed with carpal tunnel syndrome in both hands and eventually scheduled for surgeries with follow-up physical therapy, first on her right hand and then on her left. A MedRisk patient advocate contacted Katie soon after her first surgery and quickly scheduled her for an evaluation and physical therapy in an in-network clinic. Her physical therapist demonstrated the exercises and stretched her hand, which was stiff and weak from the surgery. Katie's in-clinic physical therapy sessions helped considerably.

When she became eligible for telerehabilitation, Katie was interested, but also apprehensive because she had never experienced any type of telemedicine. "I was concerned because I knew I'd have to do it on the phone and my phone is not very big," she said. "And, I thought she can't feel my hand, feel the scar tissue, and see all that is going on. But I figured why not? Just try it, it might be beneficial."

Katie's physical therapist for telerehab was Jill Carnahan, PT, DPT, a member of MedRisk's on-staff physical therapy team with extensive training specific to telemedicine. Like her colleagues in MedRisk's telerehab program, Jill holds advanced degrees in physical therapy, has over 10 years' experience providing in-clinic musculoskeletal care and is now 100% dedicated to the delivery of telerehab.

Connecting with Jill was easy. “All I had to do was download an app and get my appointment set up and that was about it,” Katie said. “I’m not the most technologically savvy person, but it was still very easy to do.”

Katie was impressed with her telerehab experience. “My PT was so knowledgeable about the [carpal tunnel] procedure I’d just had done. She explained a lot of different things and showed me a lot of different exercises.” Jill also sent her putties of different strengths, a hand exerciser tool and a stand for her phone so she could easily perform exercises at home.

“I definitely would like to do telerehab again. It was so convenient and I didn’t have to drive anywhere. I was in the comfort of my own home and I had everything I needed there.”

“I would get on the video chat with her and she would tell me, ‘do this with the putty’ and ‘use my weight like this.’ She was very informative and explained why I was having pain where I was having it and everything.”

Katie felt the telerehab treatment was just as effective as the in-clinic visits and wanted to do telerehab for the surgery on her other hand after a few in-clinic visits.

“For the first few visits, I want them to feel my hand and make sure everything is healing normally,” she explained. “Then, I definitely would like to do telerehab again. It was so convenient and I didn’t have to drive anywhere. I was in the comfort of my own home and I had everything I needed there. And my [telerehab] PT was very nice and so informative. She sent me links to videos of all the exercises we talked about and I saved them to my phone and could always go back and watch how to do the exercises.”

Katie’s experience illustrates how easy and convenient telerehabilitation can be. MedRisk’s nationally managed program for physical rehabilitation combines in-clinic care with integrated telerehabilitation services so injured workers can easily transition from in-clinic care to video conferencing when it’s clinically appropriate. For more information about MedRisk’s telerehab program, visit us [here](#).