



# Moving Forward

## ANPT Position Paper

### FAQ

#### **Why did the ANPT BOD feel this position paper was needed?**

Discussions regarding the utility of traditional physical therapy approaches in the treatment of motor impairments and dysfunction in patients following neurological injury has persisted for over 3 decades. While many traditional approaches, at the time of their development, were grounded in available scientific data underlying the neuromuscular control of movement, empirical evidence in the past 30 years has provided greater insight into the “active ingredients” of physical therapy interventions. Given a recent discussion about the utility of traditional rehabilitation approaches on the Neuropt listserv, the ANPT Board of Directors decided that a paper articulating the position was necessary to move the field forward towards embracing scientific findings in an effort to advance neurologic physical therapy education and practice.

#### **I've seen these techniques used in the clinical setting, so I'm not certain how the literature indicates that they are not effective.**

Traditional approaches represent specific forms of exercise, which is, in general, beneficial for patient’s health and function. The available scientific data suggests, however, that other exercise strategies may be of greater value by eliciting larger gains with similar costs and risks. Consistent with definitions of evidence-based practice, the position emphasizes the use of the best-available evidence to maximize outcomes and increase efficiency.

#### **Where does ANPT see the practice of physical therapy going?**

The ANPT will continue to support the use of physical interventions that provide the greatest outcomes, as based on the available scientific evidence. Importantly, the strategies advocated today may be obsolete decades from now as new research uncovers different answers for the problems facing our patients. Regardless, the position of ANPT to guide our clinical practice and education at this time and going forward will be based on the best available evidence.

In the past 30 years, the profession has evolved from more traditional models of rehabilitation to more contemporary, evidence-based strategies. ANPT anticipates a similar evolution in the next 30 years and current and future research guides our practice.