



Benjamin Gold

EDITORS' NOTE Benjamin Gold, B.Sc, PT, DPT, MCMT has held his current post for the past six years. He received his Bachelor of Science at the University of Melbourne, Bachelor of Physiotherapy (Hons) at the University of Melbourne, Doctorate of Physical Therapy at Des Moines University, and a Mastery Certification in Manual Therapy in NYC. He has been a practicing physical therapist for the past 13 years, licensed in both NYC and Australia. Gold spends his time between the U.S. and Australia, where he runs concierge home physical therapy practices in both countries. He has taught internationally on topics such as optimizing recovery after total knee/hip replacement, manual therapy for reducing pain, and strategies for pain reduction with osteoarthritis.

COMPANY BRIEF HPT NYC (hptnyc.com) and Home Physio Melbourne (homephysiomebourne.com.au) are concierge home-visit physical therapy (physiotherapy) services. They bring physical therapy to the patient's home and are very much suited to helping the time-poor professional reach their fitness and rehabilitation goals. Across two continents, they have a total of 12 physical therapists and one personal trainer. They see a range of conditions including joint replacements, neurological conditions, personal training, general deconditioning, sporting injuries, and general aches and pains. Their physical therapists travel internationally, providing care to patients in Europe, North America, and Australasia.

How is your business model for HPT NYC and Home Physio Melbourne different to other physical therapy clinics?

As we do not have the traditional overheads that regular physiotherapy practices face, we are able to offer one-hour, one-on-one treatment with very experienced therapists, each having their own specialty. We never use aides, assistants, or non-qualified staff to perform treatments. We also believe in going the extra mile for our patients, often being the care coordinator if multiple health professionals are needed in one's

The Octagon of Health

An Interview with
Benjamin Gold, President, HPT NYC

care. Each patient receives personalized exercise videos and a thorough explanation of their condition. Each physical therapist is also available 24/7 via e-mail or telephone to answer any questions our patients may have. We like to believe we provide a level of service that is not seen elsewhere in the physical therapy profession.

Recently, *The New York Times* published a very interesting article on treatment for Parkinson's Disease. As a physical therapist, what advice would you give to people with Parkinson's Disease?

Treatment for Parkinson's Disease (PD) has come a long way over the past 10 years. The hallmark treatment for PD is still medication management. Some patients opt for deep brain stimulation surgery, which can have dramatic effects on reducing tremors, but this surgery is not for everyone.

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The *New York Times* article published on January 23, 2017, titled "Exercise Can Be a Boon to People With Parkinson's Disease," brought to light some findings that have been known to physical therapists and neurologists for a while. Exercise has been shown to reduce the symptoms of PD – slowness of movement, balance issues, tremors, and rigidity – and prevent the increased use of medications to manage symptoms. Exercise can also slow down the progression of the disease.

The general advice I give to patients with PD is to have a good support network, eat a balanced diet, get enough restful sleep, and most importantly, to exercise regularly. Any exercise is helpful to improve brain plasticity, but those that have been studied and shown to have good clinical outcomes are boxing, treadmill walking, cycling, dancing, and LSVT Big®.

What advice do you give people to live a healthier and longer life?

The advice I give to people who want to live a longer and healthier life falls under "the octagon of health." Every point on the octagon represents a specific behavior.

Sleep: Get enough restful sleep each night. Seven-and-a-half hours or more is optimal.

Diet: The Mediterranean Diet offers the best evidence for reducing cardiovascular events such as stroke and heart attack. Quite simply, it can prolong life.

Exercise: Move your body on a regular basis at least five times per week. It doesn't matter what the movement is, as long as it is sustainable over the long term. Exercise fads come and go, so choose something that has been around for a while, like strength training, yoga, swimming, or running. At the moment, I am a fan of functional-based exercise. Functional exercise helps one to better function as an individual on a daily basis.

Meditation: The benefits of meditation have been proven time and time again. It is excellent for the brain and body.

Try not to sit at work: Sitting for extended periods of time over a number of years can lead to the onset of diabetes and cardiac disease. Standing desks have become relatively inexpensive compared to what they used to be. I like to recommend a desk that has the ability to be raised and lowered easily, so that one can sit down if they are feeling tired.

Be social: Studies have shown that social isolation leads to a premature death. Social isolation can also lead to inflammation and reduced immunity.

Floss: Surprisingly, the jury is still out on the benefits of flossing with regards to preventing gum and heart disease. It's an inexpensive habit to perform and will certainly do no harm for your gums.

Everything in moderation: Doing every habit in moderation, besides sleeping well, exercising, and eating well, is the best advice one can follow. It's unrealistic to believe we can exhibit good habits all the time. If you are going to indulge in an extra piece of chocolate or an alcoholic beverage, please try to enjoy it.

Do you consult and work worldwide?

We currently service Australasia, Europe, and North America, but have a network of physical therapists who are able to travel to other regions, should the need arise. ●