

Questions to Ask a Physical Therapist or Trainer™

Bring your priorities, symptoms and questions so you can leave with a plan that feels clear and realistic.



A physical therapist evaluates pain, injury and movement problems. A qualified trainer focuses on exercise instruction and fitness programming. Their roles may overlap, but they are not interchangeable.



Before the Visit



My main goal: _____

The movement or task I want help with: _____

What I feel, where and when: _____

What makes it better or worse: _____



Who May Be the Better Starting Point?



Physical Therapist

Start here for:

- Pain, injury or recovery after surgery
- Balance problems, falls or changes in walking
- Pelvic-floor symptoms
- Numbness, weakness or limited function
- A condition that requires clinical assessment

Licensing and access rules vary by location.



Qualified Trainer

Start here for:

- Learning safe exercise technique
- Building a strength or fitness routine
- Using equipment with confidence
- Progressing resistance, repetitions or volume
- Accountability when you are medically ready to train

Choose someone with appropriate credentials and experience.



Questions Worth Asking



1. About My Starting Point

- ☐ What do you notice about how I move?
- ☐ Which movements are appropriate for me now?
- ☐ What should I modify or avoid for the moment?
- ☐ Do my symptoms suggest I should see another healthcare professional?

2. About My Plan

- ☐ Which exercises matter most for my goal?
- ☐ How often should I practice?
- ☐ How many sets and repetitions should I begin with?
- ☐ What equipment or support do I need at home?

3. About Progress

- ☐ How will we know I am improving?
- ☐ When should I add resistance, range or repetitions?
- ☐ What should normal effort or soreness feel like?
- ☐ What signs mean I should stop or contact you?

4. About Fit & Experience

- ☐ What credentials, license or certifications do you hold?
- ☐ What experience do you have with midlife women and my concerns?
- ☐ How will you adapt the plan if symptoms change?
- ☐ How do you communicate with my healthcare team when needed?



Please Show Me

- ☐ The correct setup
- ☐ How the movement should feel
- ☐ An easier version
- ☐ A progression for later



The exercise I want to practice before I leave: _____

My Plan After the Visit

My top 3 exercises:

1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____

How often: _____

My next progression: _____

My follow-up date or next step: _____



Bring If Relevant

- ☐ Medication and health-condition list
- ☐ Imaging or referral information
- ☐ Supportive shoes or equipment you use
- ☐ Notes about symptoms and recent falls
- ☐ Your current exercise plan



Speak Up During the Session

- Tell them if a movement causes pain, pressure, dizziness, numbness or unusual shortness of breath.
- Ask for different wording or another demonstration if something is unclear.
- You may pause or decline any movement that does not feel safe.

Seek urgent medical care for severe or sudden symptoms.



Gentle Reminder

A good professional welcomes questions, explains the purpose of each exercise and respects your feedback.



Martine's Midlife Wellness Tip

Take a photo of your completed plan or ask whether you may record a short demonstration for personal reference.



When to Seek Another Opinion

Consider another professional if your concerns are dismissed, symptoms worsen or the plan does not match your needs.

