

Survey: 3 in 4 Skip Physical Therapy Homework, Stunting Progress

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-- Key takeaways:

- A new survey by [The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center](#)

reveals 76% of people admit they don't complete their physical therapy homework.

- Physical therapists say successful recovery involves adding home exercises to existing routines—like balancing on one leg while brushing teeth.
- Failure to complete homework can lead to additional medical procedures.



Physical therapy is a key step on the path to recovery after injuries or certain surgical procedures. A new survey by The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center shows 3 out of 4 (76%) patients don't complete their physical therapy homework, leading to stalled recoveries and potential surgical setbacks.

"The one to three hours per week a patient spends in physical therapy pales in comparison to the 168 hours we have in a given week," explained Kyle Smith, PT, a physical therapist at Ohio State Medical Center. "And that one to three hours patients are physically in the clinic is not enough to make big changes in the grand scheme of things."

Smith and his team of physical therapists at Ohio State work with patients to advance or adjust their at-home physical therapy assignments based on feedback or any barriers the patient may face. Smith will suggest simple changes patients can make to their daily routines like parking farther away at work or the grocery store, balancing on one leg while brushing your teeth, or doing stretches or squats during television shows.

"As physical therapists, we need to educate patients that it is going to take some work on their end to reach the goals they have to ultimately build strength and mobility and decrease the body's pain sensitivity," said Smith.

Survey results:

The recent survey commissioned by Ohio State asked 1,006 Americans what share of their assigned at-home physical therapy (PT) sessions they completed. One-quarter (24%) of

respondents completed all of their assigned homework, while a similar amount (28%) completed 75-99% of their sessions and another group (27%) completed 50-74% of their at-home PT. Only 1 in 10 (11%) completed 25-49% of their exercises, and even fewer (8%) completed 1-25%. There were very few (2%) who said they didn't complete any of their at-home PT.

The survey shows adults 65 and older are more likely than those under 30 to complete all at-home assigned PT exercises (30% of those 65 and older versus 12% of those under 30). Similarly, this older group of Americans is also much less likely than their younger counterparts to complete only 1-25% of their at-home sessions (5% of those 65 and older versus 15% of those under 30).

The survey also asked about the reasons why respondents did not complete their at-home PT assignments. Four out of 10 (40%) people didn't complete all their sessions because they forgot/had no reminders, which was the most common reason indicated. In addition, one-third (33%) said it was because they didn't have enough time or had schedule conflicts.

Survey respondents' reasons for not completing at-home PT assignments:

- I forgot/no reminders (40%)
- Not enough time/schedule conflicts (33%)
- Boring/repetitive (22%)
- Didn't see results quickly (19%)
- Pain or fear of making it worse (18%)
- No accountability between visits (15%)
- Didn't have the right space/equipment at home (13%)
- Didn't think they were necessary (12%)
- Didn't fully understand the instructions (5%)
- Other (4%)
- None of the above (2%)

Survey methodology:

This study was conducted by SSRS on its Opinion Panel Omnibus platform. The SSRS Opinion Panel Omnibus is a national, twice-per-month, probability-based survey. Data collection was conducted from September 18 – September 21, 2025, among a sample of 1,006 respondents. The survey was conducted via web (n=976) and telephone (n=30) and administered in English. The margin of error for total respondents is +/-3.7 percentage points at the 95% confidence level. All SSRS Opinion Panel Omnibus data are weighted to represent the target population of U.S. adults ages 18 or older.

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