

Physical Therapy after a Deep Vein Thrombosis (DVT)



Category	Recommendations
Moving the Limb	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Once you start anticoagulation therapy (blood thinners), you can move your limb (leg or arm). This includes putting full weight on it as soon as possible if it is your leg. It is important not to favor the leg or arm; instead, try to move it as you did before the clot. There may be tightness or fullness in the arm or leg, but this is normal and will get better over time. Moving the limb with a clot helps get rid of the swelling and pain. Walking every day should be started when your doctor clears you. This is usually as soon as your medication is at therapeutic levels.
Activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If you play a sport, check with your hematologist and other specialists taking care of you. They will give you information and guidelines before you return to playing your sport. For kids and adults, walking, light running, and swimming should be fine following a clot. NO contact sports or activities that have a risk for falls or injuries while on blood thinners. Do not be immobile (not moving) for more than 2 hours (NOT including sleeping). Get up and move and frequently pump your ankles up and down while sitting. This includes during travel when you may be sitting for long periods. If the clot is in your leg, do not cross your legs while sitting.
Elastic Compression Socks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compression socks decrease venous pressure, increase circulation (blood flow), and help lower swelling. Wearing one on the involved leg will help reduce swelling and pain. Pain in the leg or arm after a clot is often from a combination of swelling and not moving it enough. Try moving the limb as much as possible. Pump your ankle up and down several times a day. The swelling can come and go in the first 3 months. You do not need to buy expensive compression socks during this time unless advised. There are many over the counter options. Your doctor will prescribe a level of pressure for your compression socks. Amazon is a good option for teen and adult socks. For kids, a compression specialist is needed so they have the right fit. One key point is to put the sock on in the morning, when there is less swelling.
Hydration & Skin Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stay hydrated. This helps your body remove the swelling. Regularly moisturize your skin. The skin stretches with swelling, especially when the clot first appears. This can often result in some dryness of the skin.