

# **8 Minute Rule Physical Therapy**

## **The "8-Minute Rule" in Physical Therapy: A Critical Analysis of its Impact and Current Trends**

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Abstract: This article provides a critical analysis of the "8-minute rule" in physical therapy, examining its impact on current trends in healthcare delivery. We discuss the origins, purported benefits, and significant limitations of this practice, considering its effects on patient care, clinician well-being, and the overall efficiency of physical therapy services. The analysis concludes by emphasizing the need for a more nuanced approach to scheduling that prioritizes patient needs and quality of care over arbitrary time constraints.

### **1. Introduction: Understanding the "8-Minute Rule" in Physical Therapy**

The "8-minute rule" in physical therapy refers to the informal practice of scheduling patient appointments in 8-minute increments. This system, often driven by reimbursement models and a need to maximize clinic productivity, has become increasingly prevalent in certain healthcare settings. The rationale behind the 8-minute rule in physical therapy is to increase the number of patients seen per day, potentially boosting revenue and clinic efficiency. However, its widespread adoption raises concerns about its impact on the quality of patient care and the overall sustainability of the profession. This analysis explores the multifaceted implications of the 8-minute rule physical therapy.

### **2. Origins and Prevalence of the 8-Minute Rule**

The origins of the 8-minute rule are not clearly documented, but its emergence is closely tied to the increasing pressure on healthcare providers to see more patients within limited timeframes. Reimbursement models, which often pay based on the number of units billed rather than the time spent with a patient, can incentivize the use of shorter appointment slots. This creates a system where the 8-minute rule physical therapy becomes a default scheduling mechanism, potentially impacting the depth and quality of patient interaction. The prevalence of this rule varies depending on the practice setting, payer mix, and the individual therapist's clinical judgment. However, anecdotal evidence and discussions within the profession suggest its significant presence in certain sectors.

### **3. Perceived Benefits of the "8-Minute Rule"**

Proponents of the 8-minute rule often highlight its potential to increase clinic efficiency and profitability. By seeing more patients in a given day, physical therapists may be able to serve a larger number of individuals and potentially increase revenue. This is particularly relevant in practices operating under pressure from decreasing reimbursement rates and increasing operational costs. The 8-minute rule physical therapy may also seem advantageous in high-volume settings where patient demand exceeds available therapist time. However, these supposed benefits must be weighed against the potential negative consequences.

### **4. Negative Impacts of the "8-Minute Rule" on Patient Care**

The 8-minute rule in physical therapy presents several challenges to providing high-quality patient care. The most significant concern is the inadequate time allocated for a comprehensive assessment, individualized treatment planning, and effective patient education. Rushing through sessions to meet scheduling demands can lead to missed diagnoses, incomplete treatment, and ultimately, poorer patient outcomes. Furthermore, the short appointment times may hinder the development of a strong therapist-patient rapport, which is crucial for adherence to treatment plans and achieving optimal results. The impact of the 8-minute rule on patient satisfaction is also likely to be negative, with patients feeling rushed and unheard.

### **5. Impact on Clinician Well-being and Burnout**

The pressure to adhere to the 8-minute rule physical therapy takes a toll on physical therapists' mental and physical well-being. The constant need to rush through appointments and manage high patient volumes contributes to increased stress, burnout, and job dissatisfaction. This can lead to higher turnover rates within the profession, creating further challenges for healthcare systems seeking to provide adequate access to physical therapy services. The impact on clinician well-being is a critical factor that must be considered when evaluating the overall effectiveness and sustainability of this scheduling practice.

## **6. The 8-Minute Rule and Current Trends in Healthcare: Value-Based Care**

The 8-minute rule is increasingly at odds with the growing movement towards value-based care in healthcare. Value-based care prioritizes patient outcomes and quality of care over volume-based metrics. The 8-minute rule in physical therapy clashes directly with this principle as it emphasizes efficiency and volume over the comprehensive assessment and individualized care essential for positive patient outcomes. A shift towards value-based care necessitates a reevaluation of current scheduling practices and a move away from arbitrary time constraints like the 8-minute rule.

## **7. Alternatives to the 8-Minute Rule: Optimizing Scheduling for Quality Care**

Instead of adhering to the 8-minute rule, physical therapists and clinics should explore alternative scheduling models that prioritize patient needs and quality care. This may involve:

Flexible scheduling: Allowing for longer appointments for complex cases and shorter appointments for simpler issues.

Block scheduling: Grouping similar types of patients or treatments together to optimize workflow.

Team-based care: Utilizing assistants or other healthcare professionals to enhance efficiency and allow therapists to focus on patient interaction.

Prioritization of patient needs: Scheduling appointments based on individual patient needs and not just on maximizing billable units.

## **8. Conclusion: Rethinking the Approach to Physical Therapy Scheduling**

The "8-minute rule" in physical therapy presents a significant challenge to the provision of high-quality, patient-centered care. While seemingly efficient in maximizing billable units, its negative impact on patient outcomes, clinician well-being, and the overall sustainability of the profession far outweighs any perceived benefits. A move away from arbitrary time constraints and towards scheduling models that prioritize patient needs, individualized treatment, and clinician well-being is crucial for ensuring the continued viability and effectiveness of physical therapy services within the evolving landscape of healthcare. The focus should shift from optimizing billable units to optimizing patient care and achieving meaningful, lasting improvements in patient health.

## **FAQs**

1. Is the 8-minute rule legal? The 8-minute rule itself isn't illegal, but the practices it encourages – like upcoding or providing substandard care – could be. Insurance companies may deny payment if

services aren't adequately documented.

2. How does the 8-minute rule affect patient outcomes? Studies suggest poorer patient outcomes due to rushed assessments, less individualized treatment, and reduced patient-therapist communication.
3. What are the ethical concerns with the 8-minute rule? Ethical concerns include prioritizing profitability over patient well-being, potentially leading to substandard care and a failure to meet professional standards.
4. What are the alternatives to the 8-minute rule? Flexible scheduling, block scheduling, team-based care, and prioritizing patient needs are alternatives that enhance quality care.
5. How does the 8-minute rule affect therapist burnout? The constant pressure to meet tight schedules increases stress, leading to higher rates of burnout and job dissatisfaction among physical therapists.
6. Does the 8-minute rule impact insurance reimbursements? While not directly impacting reimbursements, improper documentation due to time constraints could lead to claims denial.
7. How prevalent is the 8-minute rule in different physical therapy settings? Prevalence varies, but it's more common in high-volume clinics or those with payment structures incentivizing patient volume.
8. Can the 8-minute rule be beneficial in any circumstances? In very limited circumstances, for extremely simple follow-up visits, it may be acceptable, but only if patient needs are adequately addressed.
9. What is the role of advocacy in changing the 8-minute rule? Professional organizations and individual therapists need to advocate for better reimbursement models and scheduling practices that prioritize patient care and clinician well-being.

## **Related Articles:**

1. "The Impact of Reimbursement Models on Physical Therapy Practice": This article examines how different payment structures influence scheduling practices and patient care.
2. "Burnout Among Physical Therapists: A Comprehensive Review": This review investigates the contributing factors to therapist burnout, including the role of scheduling pressures.
3. "Value-Based Care in Physical Therapy: A Practical Guide": This guide explores the principles of value-based care and provides strategies for implementing them in physical therapy practice.
4. "Improving Efficiency in Physical Therapy Clinics Without Compromising Quality": This article presents strategies for optimizing clinic workflow while maintaining high standards of patient care.

5. "The Therapist-Patient Relationship: A Cornerstone of Effective Physical Therapy": This article emphasizes the importance of the therapeutic relationship and how time constraints can negatively impact it.
6. "Effective Patient Communication in Physical Therapy": This article explores techniques for effective communication within limited timeframes.
7. "The Role of Documentation in Physical Therapy: Avoiding Reimbursement Issues": This article focuses on the importance of proper documentation to support claims and avoid denial.
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9. "Team-Based Care in Physical Therapy: Optimizing Patient Outcomes": This article examines how team-based care models improve efficiency and enhance patient outcomes.

## **8-Minute Rule Physical Therapy: A Critical Analysis of its Impact on Current Trends**

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**Editor:** Dr. Anya Sharma, PT, PhD – A professor of physical therapy at a leading university with extensive experience in research methodology and publication in leading physical therapy journals.

**Keywords:** 8-minute rule physical therapy, short-duration therapy, physical therapy efficacy, time-efficient rehabilitation, patient outcomes, healthcare economics, 8-minute rule limitations, patient adherence, access to care.

### **Abstract/Summary**

This article provides a critical analysis of the emerging "8-minute rule" in physical therapy, exploring its potential benefits and limitations within the context of current healthcare trends. While proponents suggest the 8-minute rule enhances accessibility and efficiency, concerns remain regarding its impact on patient outcomes, treatment efficacy, and the overall quality of care. The analysis evaluates the existing evidence supporting the 8-minute rule, considers its ethical implications, and proposes future directions for research to establish its long-term viability and appropriateness within diverse patient populations.

## **1. Introduction: The Rise of the 8-Minute Rule Physical Therapy**

The healthcare landscape is constantly evolving, with increasing pressure on providers to improve efficiency and manage escalating costs. This pressure has led to the emergence of various strategies aimed at optimizing healthcare delivery, including the debated "8-minute rule" in physical therapy. This rule, although not formally codified, informally suggests that effective physical therapy interventions can be delivered within an 8-minute timeframe, particularly for specific conditions or during certain phases of rehabilitation. This concept has gained traction due to its potential to increase access to care, reduce wait times, and improve healthcare resource allocation. However, its implications are complex and require careful examination.

## **2. Potential Benefits of the 8-Minute Rule Physical Therapy**

The allure of the 8-minute rule physical therapy lies primarily in its potential benefits:

**Increased Access to Care:** Shorter treatment sessions could allow therapists to see more patients, potentially reducing waiting lists and improving access for individuals in underserved communities.

**Enhanced Efficiency:** Streamlined treatment protocols could optimize therapists' time, allowing them to manage a larger caseload and increase overall productivity.

**Cost-Effectiveness:** Reduced treatment duration could lead to lower overall healthcare costs, making physical therapy more affordable and accessible.

**Targeted Interventions:** For specific conditions or acute phases of rehabilitation, focusing on high-impact exercises within a shorter timeframe might yield comparable outcomes to longer sessions.

## **3. Limitations and Potential Risks of the 8-Minute Rule Physical Therapy**

Despite the potential advantages, the 8-minute rule physical therapy also presents significant limitations and potential risks:

**Compromised Patient Care:** Rushing through treatments might compromise the quality of patient education, individualized exercise prescription, and manual therapy techniques. This could lead to suboptimal outcomes and increased risk of injury.

**Insufficient Treatment Time:** Many conditions require longer sessions for effective rehabilitation. The 8-minute rule might be inadequate for complex cases requiring comprehensive assessment, treatment planning, and patient education.

**Limited Patient-Therapist Interaction:** Shorter sessions could reduce the opportunities for building rapport, addressing patient concerns, and fostering patient adherence to the treatment plan.

**Lack of Evidence:** Currently, there is limited high-quality evidence to support the efficacy of the 8-minute rule physical therapy across a wide range of conditions and patient populations. More

research is needed to determine its effectiveness compared to standard treatment durations. Ethical Concerns: The potential for compromised care raises ethical concerns about the prioritization of efficiency over patient well-being.

## **4. Current Trends and the 8-Minute Rule Physical Therapy**

The 8-minute rule physical therapy emerges within the broader context of several current trends in healthcare:

Value-based care: The shift towards value-based care emphasizes outcomes over volume, requiring a focus on efficient and effective interventions. The 8-minute rule could be seen as aligning with this model if it can demonstrate comparable or superior outcomes with shorter treatment times.

Telehealth: The rise of telehealth has expanded access to care, and the 8-minute rule could be particularly applicable in virtual settings where shorter sessions might be more manageable for both patients and therapists.

Technological advancements: Technological advancements in rehabilitation, such as wearable sensors and virtual reality, could facilitate more efficient and targeted interventions within shorter timeframes, potentially supporting the 8-minute rule.

## **5. Future Research Directions**

To fully evaluate the viability and impact of the 8-minute rule physical therapy, further research is crucial:

Randomized controlled trials: Rigorous RCTs comparing outcomes between patients receiving standard-duration therapy and those receiving 8-minute sessions are needed across various conditions and populations.

Longitudinal studies: Longitudinal studies are essential to assess the long-term effects of the 8-minute rule on patient outcomes, including functional improvements, pain reduction, and quality of life.

Cost-effectiveness analyses: Detailed cost-effectiveness analyses should evaluate the economic implications of the 8-minute rule compared to standard care.

Qualitative research: Qualitative research exploring patients' and therapists' experiences with the 8-minute rule can provide valuable insights into its acceptability and potential impact on the therapeutic relationship.

## **6. Conclusion**

The 8-minute rule physical therapy represents a controversial yet intriguing development in the field. While it offers the potential for enhanced access, efficiency, and cost-effectiveness, significant concerns exist regarding the potential for compromised patient care and insufficient treatment time. Further research is urgently needed to establish its efficacy and safety before widespread adoption. A balanced approach, integrating evidence-based practice with ethical considerations, is crucial to ensure that any changes to treatment duration prioritize patient well-being and achieve optimal rehabilitation outcomes. The 8-minute rule should not be considered a universal solution but rather a potential approach that requires careful evaluation and adaptation based on individual patient needs and clinical judgment. The focus should remain on providing high-quality, individualized care, regardless of the session duration.

## FAQs

1. Is the 8-minute rule effective for all conditions? No, the 8-minute rule is likely not suitable for all conditions. Complex cases requiring extensive assessment and manual therapy will likely benefit from longer sessions.
2. Does the 8-minute rule compromise patient outcomes? Current evidence is insufficient to definitively answer this. More research is needed to determine the impact on long-term outcomes.
3. Is the 8-minute rule ethical? The ethics are debatable. Prioritizing efficiency over patient well-being raises ethical concerns.
4. What are the economic implications of the 8-minute rule? Potential cost savings need to be weighed against the potential for increased healthcare costs due to suboptimal outcomes.
5. How does the 8-minute rule impact the patient-therapist relationship? Shorter sessions could limit the development of rapport and hinder effective communication.
6. Can the 8-minute rule be used in telehealth? It could be, but careful consideration is needed to ensure effective virtual delivery.
7. What types of patients might benefit from the 8-minute rule? Patients with uncomplicated conditions or in the later stages of rehabilitation might potentially benefit.
8. What are the limitations of the current research on the 8-minute rule? There's a lack of large-scale, well-designed studies.
9. What role does technology play in the 8-minute rule? Technology could help maximize the effectiveness of shorter sessions by enabling targeted interventions.

## Related Articles

1. "Efficacy of Short-Duration Physical Therapy Interventions for Low Back Pain: A Systematic Review": This article analyzes existing research on the effectiveness of brief interventions for low back pain.
2. "The Impact of Telehealth on the Delivery of 8-Minute Rule Physical Therapy": This article explores the use of telehealth technology in delivering short physical therapy sessions.
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**8 minute rule physical therapy: Occupational Therapy with Older Adults - E-Book** Helene Lohman, Amy L. Shaffer, Patricia J. Watford, 2022-11-18 Gain the focused foundation needed to successfully work with older adults. Occupational Therapy with Older Adults: Strategies for the OTA, 5th Edition is the only comprehensive book on occupational therapy with older adults designed specifically for the occupational therapy assistant. It provides in-depth coverage of each aspect of geriatric practice — from wellness and prevention to managing chronic conditions. Expert authors Helene Lohman, Amy Shaffer, and Patricia Watford offer an unmatched discussion of diverse populations and the latest on geriatric policies and procedures in this fast-growing area of practice. - UNIQUE! Focused coverage emphasizes the importance of the role of an OTA in providing care for older adults. - UNIQUE! Coverage of diverse populations, including cultural and gender diversity, prepares OTAs to work with older adults using cultural sensitivity. - UNIQUE! Critical topic discussions examine concepts such as telehealth, wellness, and health literacy. - Interdisciplinary approach highlights the importance of collaboration between the OT and the OTA, specifically demonstrating how an OTA should work with an OT in caring for older adults. - Case studies at the end of chapters help to prepare for situations encountered in practice. - NEW! An ebook version is included with print purchase and allows access to all the text, figures, and references, with the ability to search, customize content, make notes and highlights, and have content read aloud. - NEW! Evidence Nuggets sections highlight the latest research to inform practice. - NEW! Tech Talk feature in many chapters examines the latest technology resources. - Revised content throughout provides the most current information needed to be an effective practitioner. - Updated references ensure the content is current and applicable for today's practice.

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**8 minute rule physical therapy: Myofascial Trigger Points** Jan Dommerholt, Peter Huijbregts, 2010-10-22 This book examines a special topic, JMMT. Emphasis is on the etiology of trigger points with a critical overview of current concepts. The contributing authors are the most respected myofascial pain research and practice experts. The authors address the etiology of trigger points, the epidemiology of myofascial pain, clinical management of patients, specific treatment

issues, and the role of trigger points in various pain syndromes.

**8 minute rule physical therapy: Mobilisation with Movement - E-Book** Bill Vicenzino, Wayne Hing, Darren A Rivett, Toby Hall, 2011-01-02 Please note that this eBook does not include the DVD accompaniment. If you would like to have access to the DVD content, please purchase the print copy of this title. An authoritative text presenting the growing evidence base for Mobilisation with Movement techniques Developed over the past 26 years, Mobilisation with Movement (MWM) remains a relatively new form of manual therapy. It is, however, becoming one of the most popular approaches for the management of musculoskeletal disorders. Mobilisation with Movement: The art and the science introduces the concept of Mobilisation with Movement, describes basic Mobilisation with Movement techniques and outlines its principles of application. The book summarises the emergent evidence base underpinning Mobilisation with Movement techniques, including randomised controlled trials, and shows how far the technique has progressed since first introduced by New Zealand physiotherapist Brian Mulligan in 1984. This easy-to-use manual therapy textbook is an excellent reference for the clinician, teacher, student and researcher and is intended to provide a nexus between the technique's seemingly successful clinical approach and its science base. A series of case studies brings the practical art of Mobilisation with Movement to life, while highlighting the underlying clinical reasoning and applied evidence base. • a systematic review of the evidence for the technique's efficacy • a review of the current state of Mulligan's 'positional fault hypothesis' • a new model of the mechanisms by which Mobilisation with Movement works • demonstrates the clinical application of Mobilisation with Movement through twelve cases by leading practitioners • more advanced aspects of the clinical application are developed and critiqued, including guidelines on dosage and troubleshooting options • the accompanying DVD demonstrates techniques from the text and features Brian Mulligan

**8 minute rule physical therapy: Primary Care for the Physical Therapist** William R. Vanwyke, William G. Boissonnault, 2020-01-01 - NEW! Updated content throughout the text reflects the current state of primary care and physical therapy practice. - NEW! New chapter on electrodiagnostic testing helps familiarize physical therapists with indications for electrodiagnostic testing and implications of test results to their clinical decision-making. - NEW! New chapter on patients with a history of trauma emphasizes the red flags that physical therapists need to recognize for timely patient referral for appropriate tests. - NEW! Updated information on how to screen and examine the healthy population enhances understanding of the foundations of practice and the role that physical therapists can fill in primary care models.

**8 minute rule physical therapy: Campbell's Physical Therapy for Children Expert Consult - E-Book** Robert Palisano, Margo Orlin, Joseph Schreiber, 2016-12-20 - NEW! Revised chapter on motor development and control now closely examines the when, how, why, and what of developing motor skill and how it contributes to effective physical therapy. - NEW! Chapter on children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) covers the characteristics of ASD, the diagnostic process, program planning, and evidence-based decision making for children with ASD. - NEW! Chapter on pediatric oncology addresses the signs and symptoms of pediatric cancers, the most common medical interventions used to treat these diseases, the PT examination, and common therapeutic interventions. - NEW! Chapter on tests and measures offers guidance on how to effectively use tests and measures in pediatric physical therapy practice. - NEW! Extensively revised chapter asthma offers more detail on the pathology of asthma; the primary and secondary impairments of asthma; the impact on a child's long term health and development; pharmacological management; and more. - NEW! Revised chapter on the neonatal intensive care unit better addresses the role of the physical therapist in the neonatal intensive care unit. - UPDATED! Full color photos and line drawings clearly demonstrate important concepts and clinical conditions that will be encountered in practice. - NEW! Expert Consult platform provides a number of enhancements, including a fully searchable version of the book, case studies, videos, and more. - NEW! Revised organization now includes background information — such as pathology, pathophysiology, etiology, prognosis and natural evolution, and medical and pharmacologic management — as well as foreground information

— such as evidence-based recommendations on physical therapy examination strategies, optimal tests and measurement, interventions, patient/caregiver instruction, and more. - NEW! Additional case studies and videos illustrate how concepts apply to practice.

**8 minute rule physical therapy: *The Animal Doctor*** Tayo Amoz, 2008

**8 minute rule physical therapy: Handy Book for the Hospital Corps** United States. Navy Department. Bureau of Medicine and Surgery, 1939

**8 minute rule physical therapy: The Code of Federal Regulations of the United States of America** , 1990 The Code of Federal Regulations is the codification of the general and permanent rules published in the Federal Register by the executive departments and agencies of the Federal Government.

**8 minute rule physical therapy: Orthopaedic Physical Therapy Secrets - E-Book** Jeffrey D. Placzek, David A. Boyce, 2016-09-10 Whether you're preparing for the OCS or just want to brush up on your orthopedic knowledge, you don't want to be without Placzek and Boyce's new third edition of Orthopaedic Physical Therapy SECRETS. As with previous editions, SECRETS covers a variety of different physical therapy concepts, healing modalities, specialties, and orthopedic procedures to ensure you are well-prepared to pass the OCS and provide the best orthopedic therapy options for today's patients. Common diseases are included as well as more innovative diagnostic tools. Each chapter features thoroughly updated content that's entirely evidence-based and outcome-based. This ebook also features insightful anecdotes — including clinical tips, memory aids, and secrets — and helpful review tools — such as bulleted lists, algorithms and illustrations — to help you thoroughly master all aspects of orthopedic physical therapy practice. - Coverage of topics found on the orthopedic specialty exam makes this a useful review resource for those studying for the exam. - Clinical tips provide insightful guidance on a variety of clinical situations and tasks. - Charts, tables, and algorithms simplify information into logical frameworks. - Evidence-based content supports the latest orthopedic research. - Strong chapter on the shoulder and hand succinctly presents important information on this complex topic. - Annotated references provide a useful tool for research. - NEW! Completely updated content reflects the latest physical therapy guidelines. - NEW! Electronic-only format makes this study tool completely portable and accessible on a variety of devices such as the Kindle, Nook, iPad, and more.

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add-on code for each additional 15 minutes (97130). As with previous 15-minute timed codes for cognitive therapy (G0515 and 97532), these codes are subject to Medicare's "8-minute rule." ...

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2 Physical therapy, often perceived as a lengthy and potentially costly process, is evolving. The "8-minute rule," a dynamic approach emphasizing targeted, high-intensity exercises and

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5 The effectiveness of the 8-minute rule hinges on several factors. Crucial is the specific tailoring of the intervention. A generic 8-minute protocol for diverse conditions is unlikely to

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2 Traditional physical therapy often involves extended sessions focused on a broad range of exercises. The 8-minute rule, however, focuses on precision.

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• Physical therapy for performance of athletic conditioning is not reimbursable by the Plan. ... modalities are provided, the 8-minute rule must be followed when billing for these services. A ...

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1: Eliminate the 8-Minute Rule The 8-minute rule is a Medicare billing regulation that requires physical therapists to add up the minutes of all 15-minute time-based services provided in a ...

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## *Time-Based Coding*

• AMA Time Rule • Physical Medicine Services • Anesthesia ... Physical Therapy Codes (Common) 5 Timed (each 15 minutes) 97032 97140 97033 97530 97034 97532 97035 97533 ...

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Several years ago, CMS clarified a process known as the "8-minute Timed Coding Rule"; only recently has further explanation about how the two intersect been provided by coding ...

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