

# THE EFFICACY OF TELEHEALTH

August 2020

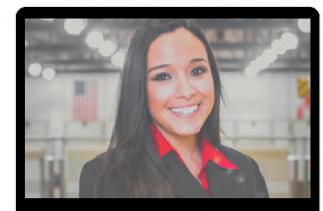


## A new look for life and sport

ALYSIA HENDERSON, MS, LAT, ATC

By now you may have seen that the RecWell athletic training program is offering telehealth services. You may be thinking, "how will the athletic trainers be able to assess my injury without physically evaluating me?" or "will I even get the help I am looking for?" Well, the truth is, while a telehealth appointment may be different compared to that of an in-person encounter, it is still an effective and efficient means of receiving quality healthcare.

**Did you know that telehealth appointments can decrease recovery time?** Electronic access to our staff and other healthcare practitioners in general can often decrease the amount of time a patient may wait to see a provider for a non-life threatening injury as an appointment is just a few clicks away (1,4). Rather than waiting until you have the time in your schedule to walk down to Ritchie Coliseum, have a ride, gas, or fare money, you are now afforded the ability to receive injury guidance from the comfort of your own home, dorm room, or apartment. Your willingness to take your injury and recovery into your own hands can expedite the process of receiving timely and specialized healthcare.(2)



Alysia became RecWell's head athletic trainer with the program's inception in the Fall of 2018. To contact her with your injury questions or get in touch with any of the other athletic training staff [please visit RecWell Athletic Training](#).



**Did you also know that studies have shown that telehealth visits are comparable to that of an in-person visit?** (1,3) You may have worried that because our staff are unable to reach out through the phone and palpate a certain area of your knee or perform an orthopedic test, that it's impossible for us to give suggestions or feedback on rehabilitation exercises and treatments, but the same standard of care exists virtually! Research on musculoskeletal conditions has shown that even post-operative tele-rehabilitation appointments have yielded better if not equivalent outcomes to that of in-person rehabilitation sessions (3). The above was true for individuals recovering from total knee arthroplasty, shoulder joint replacement, and cardiac surgery. When comparing these severe post-operative conditions to that of the typical non-operative orthopedic injury, RecWell's athletic trainers are more than equipped to advise on proper at-home care and rehabilitation exercise protocols.

**You should always know that your health and safety remain top priority during your appointment.**

If at any time during your virtual meeting it is determined that your condition requires advanced care, our staff will refer you to a physician or other appropriate healthcare provider. As noted in studies on telemedicine, it is often also a concern that a medical emergency could occur while the provider and patient are meeting virtually and that the appropriate help would be unavailable to the patient because of the distance and separation (2). Therefore, in addition to a referral process, our staff has developed an extensive intake process, which collects the necessary demographic, emergency contact, and historical information from each patient to aid in the event of an emergency. There is also a telehealth specific emergency action plan in place.

If you have made it this far, we hope that we have helped you to learn of the effectiveness of telehealth and motivated you to schedule an appointment with our staff. For more information on the process, please visit our "[Virtual Clinic](#)". We look forward to assisting and providing the RecWell community with an alternative method of receiving healthcare for life and sport!

- (1) Makhni, M.C., Riew, G. J., Sumathipala, M. G. (2020). Telemedicine in orthopaedic surgery: Challenges and opportunities. The Journal of Bone and Joint Surgery. 102. (13), 1109-1115. DOI 10.2106/JBJS.20.00452
- (2) Mcgeary, C., Gatchel, R. (2012). A comprehensive review of telehealth for pain management: Where we are and the way ahead. Pain Practice. 12. (7), 570-577. DOI 10.1111/j.1533-2500.2012.00534.x.
- (3) Shigekawa, E., Fix, M., Corbett, G., Roby, D.H., Coffman, J. (2018). The current state of telehealth evidence: A rapid review. Health Affairs, 37. (12), 1975-1982. DOI 10.1377/hlthaff.2018.05132
- (4) Six benefits of telemedicine for orthopedic practices. ReferralMD. <https://getreferralmd.com/2020/03/6-benefits-of-telemedicine-for-orthopedic-practices/>