



SpineZone: FAQ

What you need to know about the
online and in-clinic programs

FAQ: SpineZone programs

Are you dealing with neck or back problems, but you don't want to resort to surgery or injections? As a CalPERS PPO member, you now have access to SpineZone programs to help you feel better — without costly and painful spine treatments that affect your daily life.

For 13 years, SpineZone has helped thousands of patients get relief from back and neck pain through exercise, muscle strengthening and posture training. Their care team has highly trained physical therapists, exercise physiologists, physician assistants and surgeons. They're with you each step of the way, from an assessment of your spine health to a program made just for you that focuses on prevention, treatment and recovery of spinal issues.

Here are some questions and answers about how these programs work and how they can help you.



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SpineZone Online program

Getting started

Q: Does the SpineZone Online program cost anything?

A: The program is included with your CalPERS PPO benefits and comes at no extra cost.¹ Any needed equipment will also be sent to you at no added cost and is yours to keep.

Q: Do I need a referral from my primary care physician (PCP) to use SpineZone?

A: No, you don't need a referral. Just visit calpers.spinezone.com to fill out the online assessment so we can provide the SpineZone services that best support your needs. You **must** access the program through this website in order to access this free benefit for CalPERS PPO members. Once you've started the program, it's a good idea to let your primary care physician (PCP) know.

Q: What do I need to sign up for SpineZone?

A: Simply have your Anthem ID card ready when doing your assessment. You'll be asked to give your member ID number so we can check your eligibility for the program.

Q: How long does it take to enroll, including the online assessment?

A: It only takes about 10 minutes.

Q: Can I do the assessment from my iPhone, Android phone, tablet or PC?

A: Yes, as long as you have an Internet connection, you can complete it from most devices.

Q: How do I access the SpineZone website?

A: Log in to calpers.spinezone.com. If you need help or you'd like SpineZone to email you a link to the website, call **1-877-453-1144** from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. PT, Monday to Friday or email calpers@spinezone.com.

Q: How will Anthem and SpineZone use my email address?

A: Your SpineZone coach will only use it to communicate with you. Your email address is secure and won't be shared or used for any marketing or promotional purposes.

Q: Will information be shared with my PCP?

A: It's your choice to share your SpineZone assessment and other information with your doctor. However, we highly recommend sharing the information so your PCP knows about your treatment. SpineZone will provide a report every three weeks that you can share with your PCP.

How the online program works

Q: How does the SpineZone Online program assess participants?

A: By looking at your health goals and personal needs, our medical fitness team will give you a complete physical assessment of your current back and neck strength.

Q: Once I complete the online assessment, what happens?

A: The SpineZone care team reviews your responses to see if you're a good fit for the program. If so, they set up a six-week online program just for you. Next, your personal SpineZone coach will call you at the time you picked during the assessment for an evaluation. These coaches are trained physical therapists and spine specialists who work with patients having neck and back pain.

Over the next six weeks, you'll log in daily and receive a set of exercises, complete with video demonstrations. You'll also get information to support you as you work to achieve and maintain relief from pain. The exercise equipment you receive (at no extra cost to you) is yours to keep after the program so you can continue the exercises you've learned. Finally, you'll have access to your dedicated SpineZone coach throughout the program in case you have any questions or concerns.

Q: What if my back or neck pain doesn't improve after the six-week online program?

A: If there isn't enough improvement, you may be referred to a SpineZone clinic. However, if you don't live near a SpineZone clinic, we may recommend that you visit your PCP for more help and care. SpineZone will also provide you with a report that you can share with your PCP.

Q: What if my back or neck pain gets worse while I'm participating in the six-week online program?

A: After each exercise, you can give feedback to your coach. Based on your comments, your SpineZone coach will be notified and reach out to you about your pain and adjust your program.

Q: How long will it take before I see results?

A: Most patients report improvement by the third or fourth week. Results are directly related to your level of participation. If you're able to log in three times a day to track your exercises and read the content, you'll increase your chances of improving.

Q: How long do I have access to my coach?

A: You can contact your coach for 12 months from when you start the online program. Patients are released from the program around the sixth week. You can still access the program later if pain returns and you need more guidance from your coach.



SpineZone In-Clinic program

Getting started

Q: What is the SpineZone In-Clinic program?

A: The SpineZone In-Clinic program allows you to safely strengthen your spine without resorting to surgery. Our highly trained staff of physical therapists, physical therapy assistants and spine rehabilitation specialists are with you every step of the way. Your first step is having an in-clinic evaluation. They'll make sure your sessions are conducted safely, provide support and celebrate your improvements.

In addition to strengthening, you'll receive posture measurements and a customized home exercise program. Our staff will track your progress along with oversight from our orthopedic spine specialists and physician assistants.

Q: How do I get started with the SpineZone In-Clinic program?

A: Similar to the online program, visit calpers.spinezone.com to fill out the online assessment so we can provide the

SpineZone services that best support your needs. You must access the program through this website in order to access this free benefit for CalPERS PPO members.

Q: What do I need to bring to my in-clinic evaluation?

- Anthem ID card
- Driver's license
- List of medications
- Imaging results if you have them

Q: If I'm already seeing a physical therapist, should I also participate in the SpineZone program?

A: There should only be one therapist treating your spine condition. However, if your therapist is treating another part of your body, you're still eligible to be treated by SpineZone for a spine-related condition.

How the in-clinic program works

Q: How often do I need to visit the clinic?

A: Patients generally have two appointments a week, for about 10 weeks. Keep in mind, each patient is different and may need a unique care plan.

Q: How soon before I see results?

A: Most patients start to see results in the first two to four weeks of in-clinic treatment. Of course, it's important to know that results are directly related to how much you participate in the program. If you follow the treatment plan, you're more likely to improve your spine and neck health.

Q: What should I wear to the evaluation and appointments?

A: Here are some tips:

- Comfortable, loose-fitting clothing
- Exercise clothing
- Avoid skirts or dresses
- Wear closed-toed shoes
- No heels

Q: Will my insurance cover this in-clinic treatment?

A: Yes, if you're an Anthem CalPERS PPO member, in-clinic treatment at a SpineZone facility is covered. There's no copay or any out-of-pocket expenses.¹

Q: How many in-clinic visits will I complete?

A: SpineZone follows best practices for improving strength and the standard in-clinic program is 14 to 20 visits. Of course, depending on your progress, this may vary.

Q: Do I need to bring my X-rays or MRI results to my in-clinic appointment?

A: If you have any X-ray or MRI results, please bring them to your evaluation. However, you don't need to get an X-ray or MRI to be treated at SpineZone.

Q: Are SpineZone assistants certified and trained?

A: Yes, all of our physical therapy assistants are either licensed physical therapy assistants (PTAs) or Bachelor or Master's trained exercise physiologists (or kinesiologists).

Q: How do I make sure my back stays strong after I finish the in-clinic program?

A: SpineZone offers a Maintenance program for patients who are excited about their results from the SpineZone program and want to continue to train and strengthen their back at SpineZone. This program is designed to enable you to maintain the benefits of SpineZone. SpineZone staff are always available to answer any questions. To be eligible, you must have completed a SpineZone program.

As a CalPERS PPO member, the Maintenance program is included at no extra cost and you have access to the SpineZone facilities for a total of 12 months from the beginning of your treatment.

Q: Will I be working with the same team throughout my course of treatment?

A: Your first appointment will be with a physical therapist who creates your plan of care and the rest of your appointments will be with our physical therapy assistants or our spine rehabilitation specialists. We have an integrated team who will work together to meet your plan of care, and we do our best to keep you partnered with one person when possible.

Q: What makes the SpineZone In-Clinic program different from other programs?

A: The program is based on research and experience of SpineZone treating 14,000 patients over more than 13 years.² Also, SpineZone uses specialized medical grade equipment for testing and strength rehabilitation.

Active therapy is designed to help you independently manage your back care by providing:

- Strength rehabilitation
- Postural awareness
- Home plan exercise
- Disease-specific education
- Oversight of your progress by an orthopedic spine surgeon, with weekly program changes as needed

Q: How long are the appointments after the evaluation?

A: They're usually 30 minutes. Research shows that 30 minutes of active strength rehabilitation helps to avoid overexertion and is enough to provide progress.³

Q: I just got an epidural, how long should I wait before coming to a clinic?

A: Patients typically wait at least a week after having an epidural before starting treatment. If you have any concerns, please speak with your PCP before starting therapy.

¹ The SpineZone program is available at no cost for active CalPERS PPO members who are eligible for the program at the date of their SpineZone assessment.

² SpineZone Electronic Health Record (EHR) Member Report (March 22, 2001 through July 11, 2018).

³ U.S. National Library of Medicine, National Institutes of Health website, *Effect of training frequency and specificity on isometric lumbar extension strength* (accessed May 2018); ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/2144914#.