

Thomas Tippy, DPT, Has the X Factor



"I look at my work as: medical doctors can save your life, and physical therapists make that life worth living," says Thomas Tippy, DPT, a physical therapist at NYU Langone Hospital—Brooklyn.

"Thomas goes above and beyond to accommodate patients' needs and help them reach their goals. If Thomas had a superpower, it would be super strength to help any patient who may need it."

—Nominator Scott Venturino, Physical Therapist I, NYU Langone Hospital—Brooklyn

Physical therapist Thomas Tippy works with injured patients throughout NYU Langone Hospital—Brooklyn to improve their ability to perform activities independently. “My job is to get people moving again,” he says, “and I love it.”

Thomas Tippy, DPT, regularly evaluates patients to determine their functional mobility—their ability to do daily tasks—since he joined NYU Langone Hospital—Brooklyn as a physical therapist in acute care in June 2022.

His grandfather inspired his path to eXceptionalism.

I became a PT after watching the treatment my grandfather received while in a hospital in Colorado. He was a very active person into his 90s, going to the gym every day, playing six holes of golf regularly. He had a compression fracture, which should have been treated conservatively. But the PT was not done right. He ended up with bedsores and other issues. To see him go into a hospital, and not get the care he needed, angered me. Every time I see a patient, I think, “that is somebody’s grandparent, or somebody’s mom, or somebody’s kid.” And I try to get them the best care possible.

His motivation: Getting people moving.

If I had to name my professional superpower, I think it might be my ability to inspire people to get moving again. That’s my job, and I love it. I look at my work as: medical doctors can save your life, and physical therapists make that life worth living. After every injury, we have to facilitate movement. Studies show that early mobilization decreases the length of a hospital stay, reduces the chance of further injuries down the road, and increases quality of life.

A smile works wonders.

I really enjoy moving. I will hit the gym hard before I come to work to get the endorphins running, so I’m excited walking in the door. I like to enter a room with a big smile on my face. When you think about a patient in a hospital, that’s probably their worst day in a while, right? They might have been in the Emergency Department for a day or two before they meet me. So, I always walk into their space with empathy. They’re often lying in bed, waiting for answers from doctors and nurses. My goal is to try to bring some happiness to their day. When you grin, that gets them excited. Then they’re more ready to work with you, and to start to try to perform their old tasks and activities again independently. It’s often just a little bit at a time.

We offer every patient the same excellent care.

I love seeing the hospital do its best for our patients. One time, a man in his 40s, who was undocumented and uninsured, came in with a weird headache, and ended up having a tumor the size of an apple in his brain. The doctors were able to remove the tumor, but they had to cut a blood vessel, which technically gave him a stroke. After three weeks of working with him in acute rehab, he was able to function independently and go home. That is really what healthcare should be. Other times, a patient might come in who's had a stroke and can't move a finger. You work with them, and one day they're able to get out of bed, then another day they're able to stand up and take a step, then one day they're able to walk across the room. I see people go from barely being able to move to almost being back to where they were before their injury. That makes it all worth it.

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