



by **Thomas R. Saullo, MD**

*Perhaps you have back pain that extends down into your leg, and it is getting progressively worse. Or maybe you have chronic neck pain that has bothered you for a while.*

**A** *physiatrist* (fizz-I-uh-trist) often can help in both of those cases, evaluating your problem from a whole-body perspective and helping you get better without surgery.

## What Is Physiatry? How Can It Help You?

### One of medicine's lesser-known specialties

**Physiatry** (fizz-I-uh-tree) is the field of medicine that is concerned with physical medicine and rehabilitation. It is one of 24 specialty areas in which a physician can be board-certified. Physiatry came into its own after World War II when thousands of disabled veterans returning from war needed help to resume productive lives.

### What does a physiatrist do?

A physiatrist is a nerve, muscle and bone expert who treats a variety of problems that can impair movement and interfere with the performance of everyday activities. The emphasis is on conservative, nonsurgical and minimally invasive treatments to restore function, improve mobility and decrease pain.

### What's different about a physiatrist?

Physiatrists evaluate the person as a whole, rather than looking at the specific problem in isolation. For example, in examining a patient with neck pain, I might find that posture is a factor and recommend postural exercises as part of a larger treatment plan. When a patient comes in, I do an in-depth evaluation, perform imaging and diagnostic nerve studies if needed, and then develop a comprehensive plan for helping the person regain motion and recover medically, emotionally, socially and vocationally.

### What treatments are used?

Typically, I begin with conservative therapies targeted to the patient's specific needs. Physical therapy, occupational therapy, massage and stretching are examples. I also may prescribe medications, or use

other modalities, such as electrostimulation. I also perform many types of injections and other procedures to help with pain.

### What if the patient really does need surgery?

Our patients benefit from the multidisciplinary approach we take to spine care at **Spine & Scoliosis Specialists**. I work very closely with the surgeons in our practice. If conserva-

tive treatments don't help a patient, our board-certified surgeons often can. They are trained in the latest, most advanced treatments for complex spinal problems.

### For more information

You can get more information or make an appointment for an evaluation at [www.spineandscoliosisdocs.com](http://www.spineandscoliosisdocs.com). Or just call our office at 336-333-6306.



**SPINE & SCOLIOSIS SPECIALISTS**  
ADVANCED TREATMENT & SURGERY

**H**ave a back or spine problem that's keeping you from enjoying life?

Call us today for an evaluation. As the Triad's only medical practice devoted exclusively to spine treatment and surgery, we offer hope – and help – to patients suffering from all types of spinal diseases and injuries.

**SPINE & SCOLIOSIS SPECIALISTS**  
ADVANCED TREATMENT & SURGERY

**Max W. Cohen, MD, FAAOS**  
Founding Physician  
Board-certified in orthopaedics  
Fellowship-trained in spine and scoliosis surgery

**S. Michael Tooke, MD, FRCS**  
Physician  
Board-certified in orthopaedics  
Fellowship-trained in spine and joint replacement surgery

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## Meet Thomas R. Saullo, MD, Physiatrist at Spine & Scoliosis Specialists

**A**s a physical therapist in the late 1990s, **Thomas Saullo** (pronounced SAWL-lo) enjoyed working hands-on with patients to improve their range of motion and quality of life. After several years, he decided to continue his education in medical school so he could provide more comprehensive treatment to patients.

Fast forward a little more than decade, and meet Thomas R. Saullo, MD. Now a board-certified physiatrist, Dr. Saullo joined **Spine & Scoliosis Specialists** in October 2011. Dr. Saullo's focus is on physical medicine and rehabilitation, which includes providing nonoperative and minimally invasive, interventional spine care to patients.

"I typically treat problems resulting from disease or injury," Dr. Saullo says. "My goal is to restore or maximize function, speed up recovery and decrease pain for the patient. What I do is help people improve their quality of life."

His role at Spine & Scoliosis Specialists is to treat both new and established patients, working closely with the practice's founder, **Max W.**



(Left to right) **Thomas R. Saullo, MD**, has joined founding physician **Max W. Cohen, MD**, and physician **S. Michael Tooke, MD**, at **Spine & Scoliosis Specialists**.

**Cohen, MD, FAAOS**, a specialist in spine and scoliosis surgery, and **S. Michael Tooke, MD, FRCS**, a specialist in spine surgery and artificial disc replacement.

Dr. Saullo brings impressive credentials to the practice. He worked for eight years as a physical therapist, prior to and during his years in medical

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school at **Louisiana State University School of Medicine**, giving him an in-depth understanding of the role that physical therapy can play in helping patients with back and neck problems. After earning his medical degree, he completed a residency at **New York Presbyterian Hospital Columbia/Cornell** and a fellowship in interventional spine care at **Virginia Commonwealth University Medical Center**.

With the addition of Dr. Saullo, Spine & Scoliosis Specialists offers a multidisciplinary approach to spine care that benefits patients and furthers the practice's mission: providing state-of-the-art, advanced spinal care to relieve patients' pain and to improve their appearance, mobility and quality of life.