

Q&A With Stephanie Hiser, Acute Care Physical Therapy Resident

Stephanie Hiser, PT, DPT

- **Undergrad:** Lipscomb University, bachelor's in exercise science
- **Graduate school:** University of Miami, doctorate in physical therapy
- **Hometown:** Glasgow, Kentucky
- **Residency/fellowship completion year:** [acute care residency](#) 2016; critical care fellowship, 2017



Why did you decide to pursue physical therapy training in critical care and acute care?

I wanted to advance my knowledge and skills in the acute care and critical care settings through mentorship and exposure to a variety of patient populations.

Why did you choose the programs at Johns Hopkins?

When I was applying for residency, Johns Hopkins offered only the acute care program. I knew that I wanted to apply to the critical care fellowship at Hopkins after finishing the acute care residency, as I was fascinated by the early mobility program and literature that had been published.

What were your general responsibilities as a resident/fellow?

My key responsibility was to grow as a clinician by being mentored three hours per week. I was selecting challenging cases and preparing to present to the mentor, and also reviewing applicable research articles with my mentor.

In addition to growing as a clinician, a critical part of the residency and fellowship is participating in or contributing to quality improvement projects to improve the care provided to all patients.

What was your caseload like and what kind of patient populations did you work with?

Weekly clinical hours were 28–30 hours, depending on the week, as some weeks may require more research time than others. The patient populations included acute and critically ill medically complex patients across cardiovascular, medicine, neurological, surgery and oncology service lines.

How did the teaching component of the training help you become a better therapist?

The acute care residency was partnered with the University of Delaware physical therapy department, where I was able to assist with several labs. Assisting in these labs has made me a better therapist by encouraging me to reflect on the “whys” for all the little things I do in a therapy session in order to hopefully be a better mentor/teacher to new clinicians and students.

Name one important thing you’ve learned from your mentors in the program.

Understanding that the pathophysiology is the heart of acute/critical care.

Were there activities outside of work that helped you make friends and maintain work-life balance?

Happy hours with some of the other residents. Church on Sundays.

How has this training helped you grow professionally so far?

It helped me become a better clinician and advance my research experience.

Any advice you would give to someone interested in this program?

If you show up each day prepared and ready to learn, you will learn more than you can imagine in one year. Don’t be afraid to step outside your comfort zone and fail, as I have learned more from my failures over the last two years than from my successes.