

In My Desk:

Nine thought-provoking items for PTs



Form and function are terms that physical therapists are very aware of when assessing and treating clients. Form and function are also basic to nature and design. My office is in an urban area of Seattle, near the Olympic Sculpture Park, and I find that having a variety of shapes and forms on my desk allows for a more fluid dialogue with my diverse clientele.

— Mary Gales PT, Dipl. ABT (NCCAOM)

desk photo © Kyle Mutter

1. Desk Lamp:

Useful for describing a hinge joint, such as the knee, and providing lighting for tasks on my desk.

2. Blow Up Basket with Glass Balls:

These pieces are useful when describing fascia, a covering found on muscles (the vessel), and the muscle knots (glass balls).

3. The Tangle:

This object can change shape and create many forms. I use it to give kinesiotherapeutic learners a feel for muscle contraction and relaxation.

4. Books:

Texts that I have found to be helpful to my work include: "Orthopedic Physical Examination Tests," "Acupressure," "Myofascial Pain and Dysfunction," "Strain/Counter Strain," "Positional Release Therapy," as well as a body image book called "This Is Who I Am."

5. Clock:

Repeats the shape of the picture frame and is helpful to check pulse rates and keep sessions on time.

6. Fish Roe Boxes:

These came from Alaska, where I worked for many years as a PT and my husband still works as a fisherman. They repeat the shape of my desk and treatment table.

7. Various Objects from Beach Combing:

Rocks are helpful for clients learning about grip strength; a vertebra is useful for describing parts of our own spine.

8. Picture:

A photo of my dog and myself, which at a distance can look like large rocks on a beach.

9. Cup:

Handmade cup for its functionality with hand grip exercises — note the spacing for finger placement.

