

B. Physiotherapy

If you have an injury, even a minor “niggly” injury, have it assessed by your physiotherapist as soon as possible.

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Physiotherapists are often involved in rehabilitation. Rehabilitation is returning someone to normal activities after an injury or illness.

Restoring muscle function is an important part of rehabilitation. Physiotherapists are skilled in assessing muscle function and designing exercises that will improve your muscle strength and control. Having an in depth knowledge of factors such as the healing process and how to work your muscles without aggravating your problem are important.

MOVEMENT: Restoring the movement in an injured joint is also very important. It is very common for joints to seize up after injury, surgery or disuse. This can lead to tissue contracture, adhesions and arthritic changes in the joints. Again, physiotherapists are very adept in helping with this.

FUNCTION AND SKILL: Regaining your function such as returning to walking, running, throwing, kicking, lifting etc. are all part of the rehabilitation process. This needs to occur in stages and without re-injury.

HEALING: Early controlled movement actually helps the healing process after injury. The body lays down scar tissue and remodels tissue along lines of stress. Targeted exercises will actually lead to a better outcome. Again, knowing how to apply these exercises safely and effectively is important.

GYM EXERCISES: Very often your physiotherapist will utilize gym based exercises as part of rehabilitation. They may need to be carried out under close supervision initially but you may be able to become more independent as times goes on.

HANDS-ON THERAPY: Sometimes your physiotherapist will employ targeted hands-on therapy (stretching, massage, manipulation) to achieve some of the goals of rehabilitation

HYDROTHERAPY: Carrying out exercises in a pool can help if working on dry land is too difficult, especially in the early stages of rehabilitation.

HOME EXERCISES: These are like “homework” and are given so that you can enhance your recovery on your own under the guidance of your physiotherapist.



NECK RELATED HEADACHE THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW.

1. Neck related headaches are a common and under-diagnosed source of headache

Whilst it is important to rule out serious disorders such as brain tumours and haemorrhage, most headaches have a non-serious cause. One of the common sources of headache is a problem in and around the neck joints. These types of headaches are often incorrectly diagnosed as migraine.

2. Headache can be related to dysfunction of the joints in the upper neck

The upper three segments of the neck can generate headache. The joints of the upper neck can cause headache if they are arthritic, have stiffened up, are placed under excessive loading or have been previously injured (such as an old whiplash injury).

3. Neck related headache can be caused by trigger points in muscles associated with the neck

The muscles in and around the neck can generate headache if they are injured or placed under excessive strain. One common phenomenon is the development of persistent painful knots called trigger points in these muscles. Trigger points can cause local and referred pain. Pushing on a trigger point can often reproduce a person's headache.

4. Neck related headache can be related to poor posture

Poor posture has often been linked to neck related headache. Patients with a forward head posture, rounded shoulders and a rounded mid back are typically neck related headache sufferers.

5. Neck related headache can be related to weakness in the supporting neck muscles

Weakness and poor endurance in the neck muscles responsible for maintaining optimal posture, have been implicated in the

development of neck related headache. This means that many neck related headache sufferers develop poor posture or are unable to maintain optimal posture over a prolonged period of time. This is the upper neck stru



6. Neck related headache can be relieved by physiotherapy!

It is an ongoing mystery why more people are not referred by their family doctors or do not, by their own volition, undergo a trial of physiotherapy for persistent and ongoing headache. This is especially so if more serious causes have been ruled out. Physiotherapy can very effectively address the various musculoskeletal (muscle, joint, soft-tissue) types of headache. Multitudes of patients who have suffered from ongoing headache, and have subsequently been relieved by physiotherapy. Very often they ask why it wasn't recommended earlier. Physiotherapists are usually at a loss to answer that question.

7. Seek help as soon as possible

As with most conditions, the sooner intervention begins, the sooner relief occurs. The longer a problem is present, the greater the resistance to improvement. If you suffer from persistent headache, speak to your physiotherapist.

What types of conditions can a physiotherapist help you with?

Many patients are unaware of the many conditions that can benefit from physiotherapy. Below is a list of some of the common problems that we help deal with:-



- ❖ Back and neck pain ❖ Headaches ❖ Sprained ankles ❖ Injured knees ❖
 Arthritic pain and stiffness ❖ Shoulder pain ❖ Tennis elbows ❖ Tendon
 problems ❖ Muscle tears ❖ Hand and foot problems ❖ Bruising
 ❖ Fractures ❖ After joint replacements ❖ After joint and bone surgery

If you have any of the above problems, and you want to improve as quickly as possible, have an assessment from one of the physiotherapists at this clinic.

Did you know?

The human body has over 600 muscles, 40% of the body's weight

[illegible]

A close-up photograph showing a therapist's hands performing a manual therapy technique on a patient's leg. The patient is lying on a massage table, and the therapist is using their hands to manipulate the soft tissue of the leg. The image is framed with a thick orange border.

Having early assessment and treatment will help you overcome injury or pain as quickly as possible. If you wait too long before seeking help, it will allow the body to develop muscle wasting, abnormal scar tissue and soft tissue tightening. These things may prevent you making a rapid recovery.

Many patients stop having treatment prematurely because they start to feel better. Ceasing treatment, before all of the aims of treatment have been achieved, can leave you with residual problems that may require more extensive treatment in the future. Once you start treatment, stick with it until both you and your physiotherapist are satisfied with the result.

Make sure you follow your home exercise program and follow any advice your physiotherapist gives you.

Be patient. Often improvement can be slow to start off with. Discuss any concerns you have with your physiotherapist. Sometimes a number of different techniques need

CURE VERSUS MANAGEMENT

Unfortunately, the hard reality is that some problems are not curable. This does not mean they can't be managed. Good management of a disorder, such as a chronic back problem, can help you remain mobile and maintain your function. It can minimise or reduce the frequency your pain if it is not possible to get rid of the pain completely. It may also stop you getting worse (see section on maintenance treatment below).

If treatment isn't helping, you may need to have further investigation or you may need to be referred to another health care professional, such as your family doctor, to try and determine what else can be done to help you.

If you have a chronic or recurrent problem, such as back pain, neck pain, headaches or arthritis, a regular "tune-up" may help you enjoy life more.



Most of these problems mentioned respond very well to a course of physiotherapy. In conjunction, your physiotherapist will usually give you self treatment exercises, to help you improve your problem and maintain this improvement.

Unfortunately, spinal problems and arthritic pain can recur and can make your life miserable. If this is the case with you, or someone you know, then regular maintenance treatment (or “tune-up” sessions) should be considered.

“Tune-up” sessions will help keep your joints mobile, will release tight muscles and will update your self treatment exercises, so that they are giving you maximum benefit.

Many patients find that a tune-up session every few weeks can help keep them feeling good and stop them having repeated acute episodes of pain. It is also more cost

effective than having extensive treatment to overcome an acute episode of pain.

If you feel you would benefit from regular maintenance treatment, please ring to book a time to discuss this with your physiotherapist.

If you suffer an injury, a knowledge of appropriate first aid will minimise bleeding and further damage. This in turn will help you overcome your injury as quickly as possible.

The basics of first aid can be summed up by remembering **RICER** for the first 48 hours. This stands for:-

REST the injured part so that no further damage can occur. This may mean stopping work or sport immediately and it may also mean applying some sort of splint to prevent movement of the injured part.

ICE should be applied to the injured part for 15-20 minutes, every 30-60 minutes, to slow down bleeding and swelling. Make sure you avoid an ice burn by wrapping the ice in a damp cloth, so that it does not directly contact the skin.

COMPRESSION will also help reduce swelling and bleeding. This can be done by wrapping a bandage around the injured part or by compressing the injured site with your hand.

ELEVATE the injured part so that bleeding and swelling flow away from the injured part.

REFER the injured person to a health professional for further assessment and management. This would usually mean to your family doctor or your physiotherapist.

Physiotherapists are experts in managing sports and soft tissue injuries such as bruises, sprained ligaments and strained muscles.

Carry on this protocol for the first 48 hours after an injury. Also, during this time, avoid **HARM**. This means avoid Heat, Alcohol, Return to activity and Massage until you are sure bleeding and swelling have stopped.

Women's hearts beat faster than men's



Dear Physio

EFTPOS Facility Available

The information in this newsletter is for general patient interest. If you have a problem you should get it properly assessed by your physiotherapist or family doctor.