

What is Physiotherapy?

Physiotherapy is one of the healthcare professions in your community. Physiotherapy has become more mainstream however a number of people may not know what to expect from a physiotherapist or what services they offer.

Physiotherapists (or physical therapists) are health care professionals who treat and help with the prevention of many different physical problems caused by sport, work, illness, disease and aging. Physiotherapists are educated, with a minimum of four years of university, in understanding how the body moves and how the parts of the body work together.

Physiotherapists can be found in a wide range of settings including private practices, hospitals, personal care homes, schools, and at the workplace. Physiotherapists can customize workstations to reduce and help prevent work place injuries. At school physiotherapists will work alongside children with developmental delays to make everyday life easier. In a hospital setting a doctor's referral is required. You may be seen either as an in-patient or an outpatient; however wait times may vary in an outpatient setting. Physiotherapists that work in private practices are known as primary health care practitioners. This means that the public has direct access to their services – no need for a physician's referral except if it is required for insurance coverage. Physiotherapists work closely with other medical professionals.

Physiotherapists provide services to a wide spectrum of individuals, ranging from infants to the elderly. The following are some of the conditions that we may help with:

Sport Injuries

Fractures

Carpal tunnel syndrome

Pelvic Floor (Incontinence, pre and post-natal care for women)

Back and neck pain

Vestibular (dizziness, vertigo, balance problems)

Arthritis (Osteoarthritis, Rheumatoid Arthritis, Psoriatic, and Juvenile to name a few)

Pediatric conditions such as cerebral palsy or developmental delay

Neurological conditions (stroke, spinal cord injury, Parkinsons)

Cardiac (heart) and lung conditions (COPD, asthma)

Work place injuries

Muscle strains and sprains

What to Expect... The initial assessment begins with a thorough history, which will include questions related to the course of the present illness/injury, your social history (occupation, family situation, hobbies and activities), and past medical history. Your physiotherapist will then

evaluate your pain and movement patterns, strength, joint range, reflexes, and sensation. Relevant x-rays and tests that are specific to your condition can also be examined. Once your initial assessment is complete your physiotherapist will develop a treatment plan with individualized goals. Along with in clinic treatment your physiotherapist will create an exercise program to be followed at home.

The course of treatment can vary and is dependent on your individual condition. This will be discussed with you once you have completed the initial assessment.

How to find a physiotherapist... You can ask your doctor for the name of a local physiotherapist. Word of mouth or recommendations from friends and family may also be helpful. You can also look in the phone book in the yellow pages, under Physiotherapists or at www.mbphysio.org.