



THE CHARTERED SOCIETY OF PHYSIOTHERAPY

# Physiotherapy

## HEALTHY LIVES FOR ALL

### Where can I receive treatment?

You'll find chartered physiotherapists in NHS and private hospitals, health centres, GP practices, industry, schools, leisure centres and some will visit you in your own home. The majority of physiotherapists work in the NHS, but others have their own private practices. You can make an appointment directly with a chartered physiotherapist yourself, or your GP can refer you. You can search for a physiotherapist in private practice in your area by using the CSP's online search facility, Physio2U at: [www.physio2u.org.uk](http://www.physio2u.org.uk). When choosing a physiotherapist make sure they have the initials MCSP (Member of the Chartered Society of Physiotherapy) after their name. This will guarantee that they are properly qualified, governed by a professional code of conduct and covered by professional liability insurance.

The Chartered Society of Physiotherapy is the professional, educational and trade union body for the United Kingdom's 45,000 chartered physiotherapists, physiotherapy students and assistants

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(1) Jolliffe JA, Rees K, Taylor RS, Thompson D, Oldridge N, Ebrahim S. Exercise-based rehabilitation for coronary heart disease. The Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews 2001, Issue 1 Available from: <http://www.nelh.nhs.uk/cochrane.asp> Accessed 29/09/2005  
(2) UK BEAM Trial Team. United Kingdom back pain exercise and manipulation (UK BEAM) randomised trial: effectiveness of physical treatments for back pain in primary care. BMJ 2004;329:1377-81

Chartered physiotherapists offer advice and treatment for a range of health problems to help you make the most of your lifestyle





People are living longer and busier lives than ever before, so it's not surprising our bodies occasionally need a helping hand to stay in good working order. Physiotherapists can advise you on the best way to treat any problems you might have with your muscles, bones and joints, circulatory, respiratory or nervous system.

Every year, chartered physiotherapists help millions of people manage the effects of illness, accidents and the stresses and strains of everyday life. This leaflet shows you how physiotherapy can lead you to a healthier future.

## What is physiotherapy?

Physiotherapy involves using a variety of techniques to help your muscles, joints, heart and lungs work to their best effect. It can help repair damage by speeding up the healing process and reducing pain and stiffness.

Physiotherapists offer help to all ages, from babies through to older people. They are skilled in providing treatment, preventative advice and care for people with long-term or terminal illness. If you have suffered illness or an accident, they can develop a full treatment plan to suit your individual needs. Physiotherapists also have an important role in rehabilitation.

For example, helping people who have had strokes to re-learn basic movements and regain independence.

Fundamental to physiotherapists' approach is an appreciation of your role in your own care, so they work with you to integrate your care into your lifestyle.

## What can physiotherapy help with?

Physiotherapy can help many conditions affecting your body, including:

- > Spinal and joint conditions such as arthritis
- > Post accident treatment and rehabilitation
- > Back and neck pain
- > Problems affecting children, including cerebral palsy and spina bifida
- > Cancer and palliative care
- > Pregnancy related problems such as symphysis pubis dysfunction (an unstable pelvis during and after pregnancy)
- > Stress incontinence and erectile dysfunction

- > Work-related upper limb disorders
- > Asthma, obstructive airways diseases, bronchitis and other breathing difficulties
- > Sports injuries
- > Strokes and other neurological problems
- > Symptoms of stress and anxiety
- > Mental health conditions
- > Heart problems, including rehabilitation after cardiac treatment.

## What happens when I visit my physiotherapist?

The physiotherapist will assess your condition, diagnose the problem and help you to understand what's wrong. They will work with you to develop an effective treatment plan that takes into account your lifestyle, leisure activities, general health, and what you want to get out of the treatment.

This will include advice on how you can help yourself. For example, you may

be shown exercises that you can do between treatment sessions and how to set goals to achieve results. Where appropriate, physiotherapists also advise carers how they can help you.

## What can the treatment involve?

Some treatment options:

- > **Exercise programmes** – helping you improve your mobility and strengthen muscles
- > **Hydrotherapy** – showing you how to exercise in water
- > **Manipulation and mobilisation** – intervention to reduce pain and stiffness
- > **Electrotherapy** – for example, ultrasound to speed up the healing process
- > **Acupuncture** – some specially trained physiotherapists use this technique to alleviate your pain
- > **Massage** – for relaxation or to ease muscle tension

## How effective is physiotherapy?

Chartered physiotherapists measure their clinical effectiveness by the same standards applied to other health professionals, including doctors and nurses. Independent research proves that physiotherapy works. For example, studies show that exercise-based cardiac rehabilitation, often led by physiotherapists, can significantly reduce mortality in patients with heart disease<sup>(1)</sup>.

A study of lower back pain patients<sup>(2)</sup> also found the most effective treatment was a mixture of manipulation and exercise, for which a physiotherapist can provide a complete treatment plan.

To ensure physiotherapists across the country apply equally high standards, the Chartered Society of Physiotherapy, the professional body representing physiotherapists, circulates research-based information on standards of physiotherapy practice to its members.