



Physiotherapy in the workplace

Chartered Physiotherapists have specialist knowledge in the field of work related injury management. A Chartered Physiotherapist is an integral member of a team dealing with prevention and treatment of work related musculo-skeletal disorders and the evaluation of an individual's capacity to work at a given job. Chartered Physiotherapists can also assist companies to comply with Health and Safety legislation particularly the 1993 Manual Handling regulations and 1993 Visual Display Unit regulations.

- Common work-related problems are:
- Back and neck pain arising from poor work postures.
- Work-related upper limb disorders (WRULD) including repetitive strain injury (RSI) and carpal tunnel syndrome.
- Manual handling injuries particularly back injuries in the industrial and healthcare sector.
- Industrial or farming accidents.
- Hand injuries.
- Problems arising from workstation design or incorrect use of equipment.

Your consultation may be on-site at the workplace or off-site in the physiotherapy clinic and can include a detailed assessment of:

- The pain and symptoms .
- Mechanism of the injury.
- Predisposing factors - ergonomic design of the workplace, posture, use of equipment.

Specific treatment of the injury/problem could include the following:

- Therapeutic Exercise - stretching, strengthening, correction of muscle imbalance, postural correction.
- Manual Techniques - joint mobilisation and manipulation, restoration of normal tissue mobility.



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correct posture

- Electrotherapy - ultrasound, interferential and laser aid the recovery of injured tissues. T.E.N.S is used in treating chronic pain.
- Ice or heat application.
- Use of collars, back supports, splints, supportive taping and other supports.
- An explanation of the nature of the problem.
- Advice with respect to prevention of re-injury or recurrence of the problem in the context of the job/task.
- Assessment of the individual's ability to return to a certain type of work.
- Advice on safe and correct use of equipment as necessary.
- An exercise programme specific to the individual and their workload to avoid or reduce chronic disability.

Specific services available are:

- Pre-employment screening to ensure that the physical capabilities of the individual match the specific physical requirements of the job. This is with a view to safe placement of an individual within a variety of work environments.
- Ergonomic Workplace Evaluation to establish areas requiring modification and analyse potential areas of risk.
- Occupational Health and Safety training - manual handling training and awareness seminars, workstation ergonomics seminars.
- Rehabilitation and work-conditioning to facilitate safe return to the work environment.

All of these services can help both the employer and the individual minimise the risk of work-related problems.

No matter what the nature of the work, Chartered Physiotherapists are qualified to assess an individual's physical activity within the context of their job, with a view to providing expert treatment and prevention of problems. They acknowledge that this is a specialist area and have many members who work exclusively or have a special interest in this field.

A Chartered Physiotherapist is a university graduate with hospital-based training who has comprehensive knowledge of how the body works and has specialist training in the diagnosis and treatment of injuries.



manual handling guides



therapeutic exercise



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