

About your first visit

Your physiotherapist will introduce him/herself and ask you in detail about your symptoms.

- Please bring shorts or a t-shirt, if necessary, to allow the therapist to discreetly examine the affected area.
- Please bring a list of **all** medication you are taking, including over the counter products.

Your first appointment will last around 40 minutes, depending on your needs. Any further appointments will last around 20 – 30 minutes.

For many people referred to us, the right care is physiotherapy. Your physiotherapist will discuss with you if they think you need further investigations. They will also discuss if they think you should see another healthcare professional. During your appointment you will be able to ask any questions that you may have about your symptoms and your treatment.

You may also find the following websites helpful:

www.nhsinform.co.uk

<http://www.patient.co.uk>

www.nhs24.com

Are you self employed or do you work for a small Tayside business employing less than 250 people? The Scottish Government has set up **Working Health Services**. This allows people who work in a small business to access a range of specialist health services, including physiotherapy.

Telephone: 01382 825100 for further information.

Developed by Musculoskeletal (MSK) Pathways Group and reviewed by doctors, allied health professionals & patients.

Developed: 07/2012 Review: 07/2014 LN1296(a)



Information for Patients about Physiotherapy

What can a Physiotherapist do to help?

We can help if you have low back pain, neck pain, joint pains or recent sprains / strains. Physiotherapists will offer you professional advice as well as treatment. Sometimes the best treatment may be simple advice or exercises. The success of your therapy is dependant on you following the treatment plan and advice given by your physiotherapist. They will explain how your treatment works and what to expect.

If you have lower back pain / leg pain and develop any of the following symptoms, please contact your GP surgery immediately.

- Any new problem passing urine or controlling your bladder or bowel.
- Altered sensation around your back passage or genitals.
- Numbness, pins and needles or weakness in **both** legs.

What can I do to help myself?

Research has shown that resting for more than a day does not help. It may make pain and disability last longer. You may need to modify what you do at first but the quicker you get back to normal activities, the sooner you will begin to feel better. Getting stiff joints and muscles working again can be sore initially. This is normal and not a sign of damage. Changing your position or activity regularly throughout the day will help prevent and reduce the degree of stiffness. Try to build up your general level of activity gradually, but avoid doing too much too soon. **Most problems will feel much better over 3 – 6 weeks.**

If you feel unwell or have severe pain and / or swelling following an injury, please seek medical attention as soon as possible or contact NHS 24 – telephone 084545 242424.

Using hot or cold

Ice packs are helpful for an acute injury, such as a strain or a sprain, or hot, painful, swollen joints. Use a bag of frozen peas wrapped in a damp, clean tea towel for up to 20 minutes every 2 hours. Heat is useful to relax stiff or aching muscles.

Be careful when applying hot and cold as both can burn. You should check your skin every 5 minutes. If your skin looks red and blotchy, you must stop using the hot / cold pack.

Use of painkillers

'Over the counter' painkillers may be helpful in reducing the level of pain and discomfort. A pharmacist will be able to advise you on what to take, especially if you are on other medication. You may prefer to see your GP for further advice on medication if your symptoms do not improve or your symptoms worsen.

Before you refer yourself to physiotherapy

Would you like an advice leaflet about your condition? Ask for one at your GP surgery, or access advice leaflets from www.nhsinform.co.uk

Your first appointment

If you have self-referred to physiotherapy, your case will be assessed as Routine or Soon, dependant on your symptoms. When your name comes to the top of the waiting list, the physiotherapy department will contact you. You must then ring to arrange an appointment date and time that suits you. You do have a choice of where you can be seen, but it may be possible to see you sooner if you are able and willing to travel. Please note that once you have started your treatment at one physiotherapy department, your treatment will continue to be based there.