



Physiotherapy in Occupational Health

Physiotherapy in Occupational Health?

Physiotherapists work in Occupational Health (OH) to help employers and staff to manage and reduce the impact of health issues.

Physiotherapy is extremely effective with musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) such as neck and back pain. In one study, 80 per cent of people who had physiotherapy for their MSD were able to carry on working and did not have to go off sick.

How can physiotherapy help?

Physios can help to prevent and reduce the possibility of sickness and injury in the workplace, as well as help staff return to work through treatment and re-training.

Physios work with employers and staff to educate them on safe working practices and to train them on matters such as lifting, handling and equipment layout.

If you have developed a health problem or have a disability then physiotherapy may be of benefit. You may have difficulty with or are unable to carry out your current job and the physio can discuss with you what duties you are able to do and what adjustments may be required.

What will happen when I see a physiotherapist?

When you see a physio, they will assess your health issues and give you advice. Initially the physio may do an assessment over the telephone. Research has shown that even one visit to a physio can be of benefit so you may only receive an assessment, advice and exercises. However, if you need to attend further face-to-face treatment this will be arranged.

As the physio may give you a physical treatment including manipulation or exercises to joints or muscles, you may need to remove some clothes. It's a good idea to dress comfortably and wear suitable underwear.

Everything you tell the physio will be completely confidential and no information will be released without your consent.

How can I help myself?

It is important that you report any problems you are having as soon as possible to your manager, HR department or your GP.

Neck pain, back pain and repetitive strain injury (RSI) are in a group known as musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs). The proper name for RSI is now work-related upper limb disorders. MSDs and stress are the two main causes of sickness absence. The earlier MSDs and stress are diagnosed and treated the better.

You can look after yourself by taking breaks, getting active and keeping a good posture at work. Make sure you have a correct desk layout, know how to use equipment safely and how to carry out tasks, such as heavy lifting, without hurting yourself. There are also simple exercises you can do to reduce pain.

Top tips to stay healthy at work

- Take your breaks and get some fresh air if you can
- Get active and keep active – take a lunchtime walk or exercise class
- Keep your neck active – don't wedge the phone between your ear and shoulder
- Don't overstretch to perform a task – move closer to the task instead
- If a load is too heavy or an awkward shape, ask someone for help.