

Physiotherapy and Neurological Rehab



Did you know that Physiotherapists have an extensive education program and can assist you with various injuries, pain and breathing dysfunction? They also work with individuals with neurological conditions or injuries such as a stroke, traumatic brain injury, Parkinson's, multiple sclerosis or dystonia. Neurological conditions or injuries require a health care team approach including physiotherapy that may be able to help you in the hospital and in the community. Physiotherapists with a special interest in neurological rehabilitation or neurological physiotherapy are here to empower you to reach your movement and independence potential.

The aim of physiotherapy in neurological rehabilitation is always to increase one's quality of life and it is tailored to the specific needs of each individual with a personalized goal-oriented target. Goals will be different for every patient and can vary quite vastly from being able to play golf, walk up the stairs or transfer from a wheelchair to bed.

Neurological physiotherapy always begins with a thorough assessment and subjective history to ensure the patient's primary goals and key impairments are identified. Then the physiotherapist will create a rehab plan using the patient's goals to determine the most appropriate functional activities, exercises, stretches and movements to help them achieve their goals. Neurological physiotherapy is very active for the patient and involves a significant amount of skilled hands-on treatment to help stabilize the 'wobbly bits', facilitate the weaker areas or to lengthen the tighter parts. This can be viewed as the physiotherapist's hands "talking to the brain" to facilitate positive change through neuroplasticity and allowing what is abnormal to settle into more normal and automatic patterns.

Neuroplasticity refers to the brain and spinal cord's amazing capacity to adapt and recover function affected by injury. Essentially, neuroplasticity can be viewed as an overall term that refers to the brain's ability to modify, change, and adapt both structure and function throughout life and in response to

experience. In other words, the healthy area of your brain can take over the functions of the injured part of the brain. Neuroplasticity may be activated throughout the recovery process. Whether it has been a few months or a few decades since a stroke, the brain is still capable of healing and rewiring. This means that recovery is continuous.

Many national stroke best practice guidelines state that in order to improve motor recovery function, individuals should be receiving multidisciplinary therapy every day for a few hours (accumulated) to maximize movement potential. This is particularly important in the acute phase of recovery. The multidisciplinary team may include physiotherapists, physiotherapy assistants, speech language pathologists, occupational therapists and other health care professionals. This multidisciplinary team approach should incorporate the use of the functional skills gained in therapy and, ideally, the patient care environment should be set up to facilitate practice of these activities as much as possible. Stroke best practice guidelines recommend the program be individualized to account for other medical conditions, baseline activity levels, fatigue, tolerance, goals and preferences.

Whenever you stimulate your brain with positive, consistent and repetitive movement or tasks, the brain will respond. Change takes time. You will need to continuously practice specific tasks, in specific patterns and sometimes in a specific order in everyday life to improve your skills and rewire your brain.

Physiotherapists are here to guide you throughout the process of neurological rehabilitation from hospital to your home. Speak to a physiotherapist today with a special interest in neurological physiotherapy. We are one of the many health care team members that may be involved in your care and we aim to work together to maximize your function, movement, independence and overall quality of life.

The joy of empowering individuals to get back to what they love to do is the most fulfilling part of our job!

YOUR PHYSIOTHERAPIST HAS THE ABILITY TO USE A BROAD RANGE OF TREATMENT TECHNIQUES TO HELP YOU GET BETTER.



Manitoba
Physiotherapy
Association

Association
manitobaine de
physiothérapie

To find a physiotherapist
in your area, visit

www.mbphysio.org

Sponsored by **Manitoba Physiotherapy Association**