

THE CHARTERED SOCIETY OF PHYSIOTHERAPY

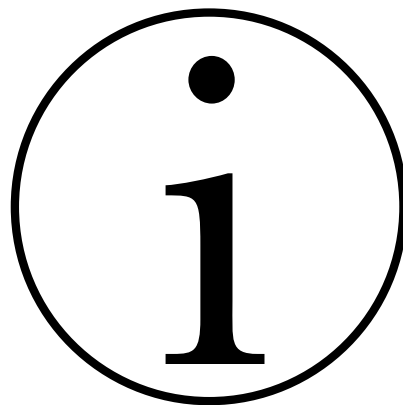
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It Can Be A Pain In The Neck

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It can be a pain in the neck

Or a pain in your back, leg or any other part of your body. In fact, you'd be surprised how many problems a chartered physiotherapist can help you solve - and avoid.

With more moving parts than any other machine, it's not surprising your body occasionally cries out in pain or refuses to do what you tell it to do. After all, there are hundreds of different muscles and joints that can go wrong. Fortunately, there's an effective way to treat many of the problems you can experience – physiotherapy.

Every year, Britain's 29,000 chartered physiotherapists help millions of people manage the effects of illness, accidents and the stresses and strains of everyday life. Whether you're young or old, active or taking it easy, there's a strong chance you could benefit from physiotherapy at some point. Half of us, for instance, will suffer from back pain at some stage in our lives. This leaflet explains what physiotherapy is and how it can help you.

What is physiotherapy?

Physiotherapy uses a variety of techniques to help your muscles and joints work to their full potential. It can help repair damage by speeding up the healing process and reducing pain and stiffness. Physiotherapists also have an important role in rehabilitation, for example, helping people who have had strokes to relearn basic movements. However, Physiotherapists don't just offer treatment, their advice can help you prevent problems returning or even happening in the first place.

What types of problem can physiotherapy help?

Virtually any condition that affects your muscles, joints or nerves. Common problems that can be helped by physiotherapy include:

- Painful conditions such as arthritis
- Back and neck pain, including whiplash
- Problems affecting children including cerebral palsy
- Pregnancy related symptoms such as back pain and stress incontinence
- Upper limb work related problems, also known as repetitive strain injury (RSI)
- Asthma and other breathing difficulties
- Sports injuries
- Strokes and other neurological problems
- Symptoms of stress and anxiety.

What does the treatment involve?

Before any action is taken, the physiotherapist will assess your condition, diagnose the problem and help you understand what's wrong. They will work with you to develop an effective treatment plan that takes into account your lifestyle, leisure activities and general health. This will include advice on how you can help yourself, for example, you may be shown exercises that you can do between treatment sessions. Where appropriate, physiotherapists also advise carers how they can help.

Chartered physiotherapists use a variety of treatments. For example:

- Exercise programmes – designed to improve mobility and strengthen muscles
- Manipulation and mobilisation – to reduce pain and stiffness
- Electrotherapy – for example, ultrasound to speed up the healing process
- Acupuncture – used by some physiotherapists qualified to practise this technique
- Hydrotherapy – exercise in water
- Massage

How effective is physiotherapy?

Chartered Physiotherapists measure their clinical effectiveness by the same standards applied to other health professionals, including doctors and nurses. This is done through independent research to prove that physiotherapy works. For example, studies show that exercise-based cardiac rehabilitation, led by physiotherapist, results in a reduction of sudden death rates after a heart attack by 25 per cent. There is also strong evidence that physiotherapy is an effective treatment for back pain.

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

Where can I receive treatment?

You'll find chartered physiotherapists in a variety of settings. In hospitals, health centres, GP practices, industry, schools, leisure centres and some will visit you in your own home. The majority work in the NHS, others have their own practices. Your GP can refer you to your local physiotherapy service. Alternatively, you can visit a chartered physiotherapist privately. Contact names and numbers can be found in directories such as Yellow Pages or contact the Organisation of Chartered Physiotherapists in Private Practice on 01327 354441.

When choosing a private physiotherapist make sure they have at least one of the following sets of initials after their name:

- MCSP (Member of the Chartered Society of Physiotherapy).
- SRP (State Registered Physiotherapist).

This will guarantee that they are properly qualified (usually after a three-four year degree course); governed by a professional code of conduct; and covered by professional liability insurance.

For further information contact:
The Chartered Society of Physiotherapy
14 Bedford Row London WC1R 4ED
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The Chartered Society of Physiotherapy is the professional, educational and trade union body for the United Kingdom's 35,000 chartered physiotherapists, physiotherapy students and assistants.

This document is available in a format for people with visual impairment from the CSP Communications Department.