




Chartered physiotherapists – Leading the way to

# healthier **lives**

A photograph of a woman with her arms raised in a gesture of joy or achievement, set against a dark red background. The image is partially obscured by the text on the right.

Stroke  
Paediatrics  
Heart disease  
Arthritis  
Vocational rehabilitation  
Intermediate care  
Falls  
Cancer  
Back pain  
Women's health  
Mental health  
Respiratory care  
Learning disabilities  
Stress management  
Older people

## What do physiotherapists do?

Physiotherapists are experts in movement, from the way we move our **backs or limbs**, to the way we breathe. The prime purpose of physiotherapy is to restore function, activity and independence and prevent injury or illness by providing information and advice on healthy lifestyles. Physiotherapists work with both adults and children and offer a multi-faceted approach to the management of a wide range of conditions. Following a full and careful assessment they will select the appropriate intervention in discussion with their client. This individually tailored management plan will be reviewed and updated depending on the changes that occur. They provide support and advice to carers as well as patients.

All physiotherapy has a health promotion component – chartered physiotherapists have an important role to play in improving public health and meeting any national or local targets, such as those for stroke, coronary heart disease and mental health.

Physiotherapists work in hospitals, intermediate and primary care.

In acute settings, they can be found in outpatient departments, treating spinal problems, arthritis, accidents and **sports injuries**. They are on most wards, helping to rehabilitate patients, for example following head injuries and acute respiratory episodes for cystic fibrosis sufferers.

In primary care, physiotherapists work in their own and GP practices, residential homes, day centres, specialist units and patients' own homes.

They work individually or in collaboration with other healthcare professionals such as nurses, GPs, consultants, psychologists, speech and language therapists and occupational therapists as part of a multi-disciplinary team.

Physiotherapists may also be found in the workplace offering advice on healthy lifestyles and ergonomics, as well as treating patients.



Photographer Sam Tanner



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Across the UK, physios are demonstrating ways in which they can make a difference  
underway throughout

**England, Northern Ireland, Scotland**

*where physios are...*

### **Moving beyond traditional boundaries**

Patients are gaining rapid access to diagnosis and treatment, thanks to a team of extended scope practitioners in Newham. Waiting lists are also being reduced. The Extended Scope Physiotherapy Service is geared towards patients who do not need surgical intervention, or medical management. Physiotherapist extended scope practitioners possess additional skills and techniques beyond the core skills of physiotherapy, which enable them to triage for GP referrals, ask for investigations such as x-rays, scans and blood tests, or undertake procedures such as bronchoscopies. The practitioners can use test results to assist clinical diagnosis and take charge of a patient's ongoing clinical management, which takes pressure off hospital consultants' lists, ensuring that those patients who do need medical management can be seen more rapidly.

### **Tackling stroke strategically**

In Northern Ireland, where stroke is one of the leading causes of mortality, physiotherapists are involved in a multidisciplinary initiative to influence strategy and share good practice. The Northern Ireland Multidisciplinary Association of Stroke Teams (NIMAST) has over 250 members and acts as an information network and exchange where members share their expertise and encourage evidence based practice. The group is currently working to influence strategy at national level and aims to facilitate the development of clear policies and protocols to help influence stroke prevention and management in the future.

### **Ensuring employees are fit to work**

Every year 25,000 people stop work for good because of work-related illness. Helping them back to work and preventing others from having to quit are key priorities. One NHS trust found specialist physiotherapy and other private rehabilitation services a quick and effective way of helping injured staff get back to work. East Anglian Ambulance referred 18 staff who were off work with serious back injuries to Bury Physio Rehabworks in Bury St Edmunds. Treatment consisted of a blend of physiotherapy, exercise, muscle building and lessons to teach health workers how to lift properly and control their pain. They were also taught stretching exercises to tackle any subsequent twinges. After 4-6 weeks of treatment, most injuries were healed and many staff returned to work stronger than they were before they became injured. All but two of the injured staff returned to work full time and managers are confident that Rehabworks has saved the trust hundreds of thousands of pounds in sick pay.

### **Leading the way in primary care**

A chartered physiotherapist broke new ground in 2002 by becoming the first allied health professional to chair a primary care trust's (PCT) Professional Executive Committee. The physiotherapist, who took up his post in Cumbria, plays a leading role in contributing to the strategic direction of the PCT and is helping to deliver new and innovative health reforms. Physiotherapists can bring much more to primary care settings than just their clinical expertise. In an environment where good communication and teamwork skills really count, physios are ideally placed to meet the challenge of making sure that the many different functions of PCTs operate harmoniously.



make a **real difference** – not only to patients with a diverse range of healthcare needs, but also in

## England and Wales

### Empowering patients

Physiotherapists are legally allowed to be the first point of patient contact within the NHS, but the majority of patients still arrive at physiotherapy via a medical referral. In Dundee, Scotland an 18-month project at the Westgate Health Centre found that allowing patients direct access to physiotherapy without a referral from their family doctor could save the average five-doctor GP practice a month's consulting time each year. The Westgate Centre has a practice population of 8,000 and an average of 340 physiotherapy referrals in a year. Only a quarter of patients self-referred. However, if all patients followed the self-referral route, the physiotherapy-led project calculated that an average 88 hours of GP consultation time would be saved each year.

Photographer Sam Tanner



### Offering intermediate-care solutions

A physiotherapy-led intermediate care service at Huntingdonshire Primary Care Trust has benefited patients and GPs alike. The service, which has been operating for three years, aims to prevent hospital admission, ensure a timely discharge and saves over 6,000 hospital bed days a year. Referrals usually come from GPs, A&E staff, district nurses and social workers. Under the scheme, patients are assessed; a care plan is decided upon and rehabilitation assistants who are trained across physiotherapy, nursing and occupational therapy deliver treatment. This multidisciplinary streamlined service is proving popular among patients who prefer not to be passed from one health professional to another and has significantly reduced the burden on GPs.

### Speeding up waiting times in accident and emergency

A physiotherapy extended scope practitioner in the Accident and Emergency department at University Hospital Cardiff rapidly sped up waiting times for patients during his first 18 months in post. His skills in assessing patients following accidents, requesting x-rays and scans and referring to other specialists, meant that valuable time was saved for patients and doctors. Typical patients benefiting from his expertise were those suffering with acute soft tissue injuries - often sustained by sports people or by those simply falling over.

### Focusing on the long-term unemployed

Physiotherapists play a central role in the provision of vocational rehabilitation services for people with musculoskeletal pain. Throughout the UK, physio-led rehabilitation programmes are proving effective in returning people to normal activities, including work. A physio working as a research fellow at the University of Manchester recently looked at approaches that would enable those suffering discomfort to remain in work and help those who'd taken time off with musculoskeletal problems to return to the job market. 84 long-term unemployed people who were unable to access work because of low back pain attended eight half-day sessions of active rehab, two days of vocational focusing and job search training, and three one hour counselling sessions. Six months after the programme began, nearly 45% were in employment. Over 70% of clients had a 'positive' outcome – i.e. had become involved in training or voluntary work. This programme has been successfully replicated in other parts of the country and demonstrates that low back pain doesn't have to put an end to career progress.

contributing to organisational development and planning, as well as lightening the burden on other

### Helping patients cope with cancer

The physiotherapy department at the Clatterbridge Centre for Oncology provides a full range of services for cancer patients in addition to other treatment they might be receiving. A regular class for breast cancer patients has been developed which provides advice on moving and handling, and managing fatigue. Physiotherapists also teach patients specific exercises and offer guidance on soft tissue management and relaxation.

### Cutting absenteeism among council workers

A pilot physiotherapy service aimed at reducing levels of absenteeism at Birmingham City Council worked so successfully that it was decided to make the scheme permanent.

During the pilot phase, weekly physiotherapy sessions were organised in a bid to tackle back problems, which account for almost 40 per cent of cases referred to the council's occupational health service. 48 out of 80 people who completed their treatment were able to return to their normal work, while a further 19 were offered treatment designed to help them stay at work. Others received ongoing treatment, or returned to modified duties. The permanent service includes a back care clinic, which works with employees' own GPs and the council's manual handling team. Councillors are delighted with the success of the service and feel it has paid for itself many times over in terms of benefits to the council and its staff.

### Encouraging exercise and activity in the community

A physiotherapist is working towards increasing activity levels within a mixed race community in Greater Manchester. Having consulted residents about the project and discovered typical barriers to making lifestyle changes, the physiotherapist was able suggest a number of quick solutions. A crèche facility for an exercise group was established, a tutor for an Asian women's exercise group was introduced and a key to the Women's Refuge was issued to allow females access to leisure services. The physiotherapist also identified a number of hobbies of interest to members of the community and developed a directory listing activities available in the area. As the scheme evolved, more and more initiatives have been introduced within the community. New developments include:

- **'Led walks' which help Asian women protect themselves against osteoporosis**
- **a 'green gym'**
- **a library scheme where the public can access health information which has been reviewed by health professionals and deemed useful for the community.**

### Giving children a better chance

In Wales, the paediatric physiotherapy team at the Children's Centre in Port Talbot has long believed in the benefits of multiprofessional and inter-agency working. Every year, the team organises the 'Schools Challenge' as part of its summer programme. Supported by a local voluntary organisation and linking in with a variety of local services, the Schools Challenge aims to provide:

- **a safe but challenging environment for children with special education needs**
- **therapy through play and challenging activities**
- **an opportunity for children with disabilities to compete in a team, represent their school and to raise awareness of the needs and aspirations of all young people.**



er health professionals, particularly GPs. **A broad spectrum of projects and initiatives** are

### Overseeing the management of orthopaedic patients

An orthopaedic screening service run by five extended scope physiotherapists at Community Health Sheffield successfully cut waiting times by singling out patients who did not need to see an orthopaedic surgeon. The Sheffield model was set up in response to GP and patient dissatisfaction with average waiting times, which in the late nineties stood at 11 months. Under the new initiative, two clinics per month were offered, catering for referrals from a six-partner practice. The clinic offered five 40-minute appointments for new patients. In this study, 72.4 per cent of patients were effectively managed by clinical physiotherapy specialists. The scheme proved so successful it was extended citywide to cover 300 general practitioners.

Photographer Sam Tanner



### Improving care for heart disease patients

A rehabilitation initiative for heart attack patients has been set up which involves following the guidance in a heart manual. The comprehensive six-week, home-based programme includes exercise, education and psychological adjustment. Patients are introduced to the manual in hospital and, once discharged, are visited at home by specially trained health professionals who continue to run the programme. After six weeks, patients are monitored and depending on progress made are discharged fully, referred back to their GP for more specialist advice, or referred back to hospital for more intensive rehabilitation.

### Making a difference in mental health

In Rotherham an exercise referral scheme for people with mental healthcare needs has been running successfully for a number of years. Clients are referred to the scheme by any professional involved in their care and are then screened by a physio who devises a programme of treatment suited to their needs. The range of physiotherapy services available to clients is extensive. Programmes include:

- **multigym and exercise sessions led by the physiotherapist in a primary care rehab centre**
- **swimming sessions in the hydrotherapy pool led by trained physiotherapy assistants. Clients with physical problems are treated by the physio**
- **weekly visits to local leisure centres, supervised by trained physiotherapy assistants.**

Clients whose mental state prevents them from accessing the sessions outlined above take part in tailored one-to-one sessions with the physiotherapist.

### Preventing the elderly from falling

Physiotherapy, as a major component of organised rehabilitation, reduces the need among older people for acute admissions, hospital stays and long-term care placements. Falls are the major cause of hospitalisation for older people. The Northern General Hospital in Sheffield established a rapid response health and social services team, including physiotherapy, for older people admitted to A&E after a fall. Over a nine-month period, the estimated bed-days saved was equivalent to a ward with 17 beds, while physiotherapists' advice for older people on fall prevention in the Richmond, Twickenham and Roehampton Healthcare NHS Trust resulted in a reduction in cost of older people being admitted to hospital and seeking admissions into nursing homes. Clients reported increased confidence, independence and ability to go out as well as a decrease in the fear of falling.

## Physiotherapy - on the increase

Physiotherapy is an **expanding** profession. Chartered physiotherapists have become key players in delivering a modern healthcare service and are making a significant impact in a number of new areas. In recognition of the key role which chartered physiotherapists have to play - particularly in rehabilitation and intermediate care - the governments of England, Wales, Northern Ireland, and the Republic of Ireland have pledged to increase numbers.



Photographer Sam Tanner

In England, the number of NHS physiotherapists is set to rise by 59 per cent, in Wales by 51 per cent and in the Republic of Ireland by 100 per cent over the next few years. In England, 6,500 more therapists are promised by 2004.

Meeting these targets is crucial in order to produce shorter stays in hospitals, reduce waiting times and provide more community support. The Chartered Society of Physiotherapy wants to see these targets met and is calling for a similar commitment in Scotland, and also for an increase to the intended growth of just four per cent in Northern Ireland.

Just some of the areas in which physiotherapists work include:



Photographer Chris Kelly

- Amputee rehabilitation
- Animal therapy
- Burns care
- Cancer care
- Cardiac rehabilitation
- Complementary therapies (including acupuncture, craniosacral therapy, electrotherapy and reflex therapy)
- Contingence treatment
- Cystic fibrosis
- Falls
- Haemophilia
- HIV
- Hand therapy
- Hydrotherapy**
- Learning disabilities
- Management
- Manipulation
- Massage
- Mental health
- Neurology
- Occupational health
- Older people
- Orthopaedics
- Paediatrics
- Pain
- Respiratory care
- Rheumatic care
- Sports medicine
- Therapeutic riding
- Vocational rehabilitation
- Women's health

## How can I find a physiotherapist?

Your local GP or hospital should be able to recommend a physiotherapist. For more information visit Physio2u which offers advice on accessing physiotherapy on the NHS and in the independent sector and also houses an on-line database of CSP members operating privately. This can be found at [www.csp.org.uk](http://www.csp.org.uk).

You can also contact the Organisation of Chartered Physiotherapists in Private Practice on 01327 354441.

When choosing a physiotherapist, always 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 they are properly qualified, governed by a professional code of conduct, and covered by professional liability insurance.

## What is the CSP?

The Chartered Society of Physiotherapy is the only professional, educational and trade union body for physiotherapists, physiotherapy students and physiotherapy assistants in the UK. We are an active campaigning and service-providing organisation, which currently has more than 40,000 members and continues to grow.

We represent the profession to Government, commissioners, professional bodies, the voluntary sector, consumers and others, using face to face meetings, the media, lobbying, briefings, publications and consultations.

Our headquarters are in London, and we also have offices in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

For more information contact us at any of our offices or visit the CSP website at [www.csp.org.uk](http://www.csp.org.uk)

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