

Physiotherapy Self-Referral Information

Physiotherapists have skill in the assessment and treatment of injuries and conditions that affect muscles, joints and soft tissues such as low back pain, shoulder pain, neck pain, knee pain, recent injuries or joint and muscular pain.

If you are suffering with a similar condition, and would like to see a physiotherapist for an assessment please complete a self-referral form. This can be found at the below link, your GP practice or hospital reception.

www.dorsethealthcare.nhs.uk/patients-and-visitors/our-services-hospitals/physical-health/outpatient-physiotherapy-service

Please note this service is only available at some of our community hospitals, for patients registered at selected GP practices in Dorset.

If you have any concerns you can always be referred to physiotherapy in the usual way with a letter from your GP, Consultant or Nurse.

What will happen next?

A physiotherapist will look at your form to decide how soon we will need to see you. We have urgent, soon and routine appointments. Your appointment may be 30-45 minutes, however you may be offered a shorter appointment in our 'Rapid Assessment Clinic' in order to commence your assessment and treatment plan as soon as possible. We will contact you as soon as we can to arrange an appointment.

What can I do to help myself in the meantime?

Research has shown that resting for more than a day or so does not help with problems such as back pain and may actually prolong pain and disability. You may need to modify your activities initially, but the sooner you get back to normal activity the sooner you will feel better.

Initially moving stiff joints and muscles can be painful, but this is a normal response and not a sign of damage. Feeling a bit sore initially is also normal and often a good sign that you are making progress. Gentle movements of the joints/muscles will help to prevent continued pain and stiffness.

Changing your position or activity frequently throughout the day will help to prevent and reduce stiffness. Try to build up your general activity gradually.

Hot or Cold?

If you have a recent injury (less than 72 hours) you may benefit from a pack of frozen peas or ice wrapped in a damp towel for 10 – 20 minutes. This may help to reduce any heat/swelling.

If you have an old injury or recurring problem you may find that holding a hot water bottle wrapped in a towel on the affected area for 10 – 20 minutes reduces pain. Movement of the affected area will aid in preventing stiffness and pain.

NB: Be aware that hot and cold can BURN and that you need to check (every 5 minutes) that your skin does not become very red or blotchy. If this happens **STOP** immediately.

Painkillers

‘Over the counter’ painkillers can be helpful. A pharmacist will be able to advise you on the appropriate tablets. If your symptoms worsen you may wish to see your GP.

Further Information

The following websites contain some information you may find useful to help your recovery

Some useful exercises for a variety of conditions

<https://www.csp.org.uk/tags/patient-information-leaflets>

<https://www.nhsinform.scot/symptoms-and-self-help>

<https://www.versusarthritis.org/about-arthritis/managing-symptoms/exercise/>

Some tips and guidance on Physical activity with ‘Fitness Studio’ videos/tutorials

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/>

Advice to support your recovery with advice on health and wellbeing

<https://www.livewell-dorset.co.uk/>

Some useful information if you have longstanding pain

<https://www.paintoolkit.org/>