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यदि आपको अनुवाद की ज़रूरत है तो कृपया इस नंबर पर फोन करें: 01932 723553

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Physiotherapy in Pain Management

Physiotherapy Department



Image from www.perthbraincentre.com.au/chronic-pain

Pain management

Patients can be referred to physiotherapy from the pain clinic to help them build a management program for their problem/condition. This booklet has been created to help you understand what to expect from physiotherapy before your first visit.

What is Physiotherapy?

Physiotherapists help people affected by injury, illness or disability through movement and exercise, manual therapy, education and advice. The key principle of physiotherapy is the patient's involvement in their own care, through education, awareness, empowerment and participation in their treatment. This is achieved by taking a 'whole person' approach to health and wellbeing.

What is pain?

Health professionals often talk about different types of pain - Short-term pain is referred to as "Acute Pain" which often has an obvious cause, such as a cut or sprain. Long term pain is often termed "Chronic" or "Persistent" Pain and often is more complex in nature and the cause may be more difficult to identify.

There are millions of nerve endings in every part of your body and stimulation of these nerve endings will result in electrical signals being sent to the spinal cord and then up to the brain. The electrical signals arriving at the brain travel through many different nerve connections called 'synapses'. Signals travel through areas of the brain associated with emotional experience, anxiety, emotions, sleep, appetite and memory. Sometimes these nerve pathways become extremely good at sending these signals, to the point that they are over-excitabile and start to 'fire' signals without

Further Information

We endeavour to provide an excellent service at all times, but should you have any concerns please, in the first instance, raise these with the Matron, Senior Nurse or Manager on duty. If they cannot resolve your concern, please contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on 01932 723553 or email pals@asph.nhs.uk. If you remain concerned, PALS can also advise upon how to make a formal complaint.

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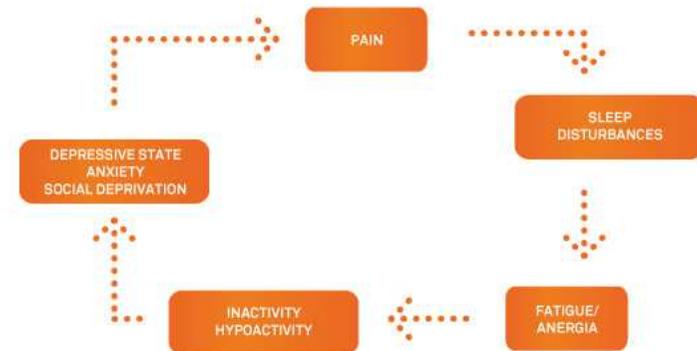
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Your physiotherapy appointment

When you attend your appointment, your physiotherapist will ask you lots of questions about yourself including; questions about your lifestyle and the effect pain has on your life. They will conduct a physical examination to establish your ability to move, your confidence in moving and perhaps the patterns of your movement. From this information, they will come up with a treatment plan with you. In some cases this may involve advice and you will be encouraged to continue managing independently, with the strategies outlined in this leaflet. You are likely to be advised on exercises to improve your strength and range of movement. Together with your physiotherapist you will be able to discuss what is best for you and your long term management.

much stimulation of the nerve endings. You may experience this as pain when someone touches you or your clothes touch your skin. This process is called central sensitisation and is one of the reasons why persistent pain does not easily go away. It can also be a reason why certain treatments which work for some people may not work for you. Because the nerve pathway travels through areas of the brain associated to emotional experience, the signal can be modified by distressing thoughts, stress or worry. This can create a 'viscous cycle' of pain as illustrated here:



Further information about pain can be found in this useful five minute youtube video: www.youtube.com/watch?v=4b8oB757DKc
Search - Understanding Pain & what to do about it in less than 5 minutes

I have long term pain will it ever fully go?

Persistent pain is complex and not easily fixed. People who suffer this pain may need to accept that it may continue to persist as no complete cure is available. This is not necessarily a sign that further damage is being done. It also does not mean that you cannot maximise your functional abilities and learn strategies to

live a fulfilling life whilst managing your symptoms. Trying to break the 'viscous cycle' is key to achieving this. It may involve looking at your activity levels and trying to increase them gradually. It may involve trying strategies to ensure you get better sleep. By using techniques to improve your life, and to better manage your symptoms, your condition can feel more acceptable to you.

How will Physiotherapy help me with my pain?

Physiotherapists use a range of treatments for persistent pain. They can offer exercise, manual therapies and advice to help manage your problem. The aim is to focus on you as an individual to help you break *your* specific viscous cycle.

Exercise Many people with chronic pain avoid the idea of activity as they believe it will worsen their condition. However movement and exercise of painful body parts often helps to restore function and reduce pain. Inactivity due to pain can lead to stiff joints, increased weight, poor fitness, weak muscles and getting breathless more easily which all can increase pain further.

Exercise for chronic pain is designed to help you build on what you can do and to support you into trying things that you would like to do. Hopefully by engaging in something enjoyable it will be easier to keep it up in the longer term, rather than seeing exercise as a chore. Sometimes this is not easy, as unaccustomed activity can make us ache. Gradually as your body gets stronger, fitter and more flexible these feelings settle and you are able to enjoy many more activities in your life. Being active and avoiding excessive bedrest has been shown in research to be one of the most important strategies for helping cope with persistent pain.

Pacing trying to carry on with an activity to the point of unbearable pain or exhaustion is rarely helpful. It is tempting to "push through the pain" but usually this makes the pain worse. We call this the boom-bust cycle – for every day you feel good and overdo it (boom) you tend to have a lousy day the next (bust). Pacing is about setting yourself baselines from which you aim to build. For example, you may manage 15 minutes of walking before you pain increases. It would be sensible to therefore start with taking regular 10 minute walks and gradually building on the duration week by week. With time you will find you can do more and more and you can avoid the boom-bust cycle.

Relaxation Being in pain can make your muscles very tense. This may happen without you even noticing it. As a result your body constantly 'holds' this tension which increases your symptoms. Relaxation can help you to become more aware of this and allows you to find ways to 'let the tension go'.

Lifestyle changes It is important that you consider all aspects of your lifestyle – such as sleep, caffeine intake, diet and any habitual postures which you may have adopted. These can be discussed with the physiotherapist and changes can be recommended.

Goal setting this is important in both the short and longer term and can help keep you on track. It gives you something to aim for and a direction in your recovery. These goals must be specific to you and things you actually want to achieve. Your physiotherapist will help you to break goals down into manageable steps.