

CELEBRATING NATIONAL PHYSIOTHERAPY MONTH

Physiotherapy. It'll move you!

MAY 1 - MAY 31, 2009

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Physiotherapists: keeping you moving

By Liz van Zutphen, PT

The cap on soft tissue claims for pain and suffering related to motor vehicle collisions (MVC) has had lots of publicity over the past couple of years. Unfortunately, there has been a large degree of confusion about what this means for those injured.

"It is critical that that we inform the public that this cap has nothing to do with the right to incur cost associated with reasonable medical care for management of injuries sustained" says Dan Purcell, Physiotherapist and president of the Private Practice Division of Physiotherapists in Nova Scotia.

"This would include costs for physiotherapy treatment."

With the sleet, snow and ice of this past winter, many Nova Scotians fell victim to injuries associated with MVCs. These individuals face a variety of stressors including car damages, personal

injury, and lost time from work due to personal injury.

Physiotherapy is the number one choice for treatment of such injuries. Physiotherapists work with doctors, insurance companies, and other health professionals throughout the rehabilitation process with the goal of returning you to a full active lifestyle.

A physiotherapist will assess your body, educate you about your symptoms and injuries, and provide you with a treatment plan to help you manage pain, but also to assist you in returning to work and activities of daily living.

Physiotherapy treatment plans may vary depending on the extent of your injuries, however treatment plans would typically contain exercises to regain range of movement and to strengthen injured body parts, manual therapy (hands on therapy) to restore movement to stiff joint, desensitize painful nerves, and loosen tight muscles and modalities such as heat, ice, ultrasound, TENS or

acupuncture to help with pain.

Current research suggests early and active rehabilitation in conjunction with return to normal activities as soon as possible is essential for prevention of chronic pain following a MVC.

In Nova Scotia, auto insurance coverage for injuries is classified as No Fault insurance, which means there is no need to determine fault of the accident prior to seeking help from a physiotherapist. Although it is natural to worry about how one would pay for treatment, remember that if you have auto insurance you have the right to seek professional advice from a physiotherapist about how to recover from your injuries and get back to life.

If you have any questions about your rights under your No Fault auto insurance policy, talk to your insurance broker and book an appointment with a physiotherapist today. To find a Nova Scotia physiotherapist, visit www.physiotherapyNS.ca.



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Physiotherapists develop rehabilitation programs based on their clients specific health and lifestyle requirements.

'Pre' habilitation, not just rehabilitation

By Sarah Manley, PT

Nova Scotians win the not-so-prestigious title of ranking second in the country for deaths due to cardiovascular disease and diabetes. According to the Public Health Agency of Canada, approximately 2,800 people in this province die every year of cardiovascular disease (heart disease, stroke and atherosclerosis). The leading cause of death in the country, cardiovascular disease accounts for 36 per cent of the deaths in Nova Scotia. Sadly, many of these deaths could have been prevented by addressing the 'modifiable' risk factors; things that we as individuals can do something about by making healthier lifestyle choices.

Examples of risk factors include inactivity, smoking, obesity, poor nutrition and stress. In fact, it is known that inactivity is one of the leading risk factors for cardiovascular disease, with a person's fitness abilities and exercise habits being strongly tied to their overall longevity.

Physiotherapists play an important role in helping people to prevent and manage chronic diseases like cardiovascular disease and obesity. They are primary health care professionals who have an advanced understanding of how the body moves, the impact injuries have, and how to restore and maximize function through individualized, appropriate exercise plans. A physiotherapist can help those with obesity and arthritis to learn how to

move effectively to meet their fitness goals, and can coordinate tailored exercise plans after a heart attack or stroke.

A physiotherapist understands that people are much more than just body parts, and designs programs around the 'whole person.' Even if you are healthy, you may benefit from a physiotherapy consultation to ensure you are doing all you can to minimize injury and prevent unwanted chronic diseases.

Physiotherapists help their clients set goals that are meaningful and realistic so they can develop the confidence and skill to be active for the rest of their lives. Often people don't realize that making small changes to their lifestyle can have a big impact on their overall health. For instance, parking your car farther away or taking the stairs instead of the elevator, can contribute to improved health outcomes.

The importance of a multidisciplinary approach to modifying risk factors is something that physiotherapists recognize as being a key component to success. They work with other health professionals such as nurses, doctors and dietitians to ensure the best care for clients is provided.

If you haven't been active in a long time and are unsure of what to do to get started, make an appointment to see a local physiotherapist. To find a physiotherapist near you, check out www.physiotherapyns.ca. You do not need a doctor's referral to see a physiotherapist.



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Physiotherapists encourage people to stay active at all life stages, to maintain mobility and prevent illnesses such as cardiovascular disease and diabetes.

Top 5 exercise tips from a physiotherapist

- Move your body daily;
- Remember that some activity is better than none;
- Start slow initially and build up to a brisk pace;
- Add up your activity in 10-minute blocks, for a total of 30 to 45 minutes;
- Do something you enjoy that gets your heart pumping.

Kegel exercises: physiotherapists help ensure effectiveness

By Stella Roy
BSc.PTr

Tightening pelvic floor muscles (Kegel muscles) is important for maintaining control of bladder, bowel and sexual function in both men and women. It may surprise you to know that pelvic floor muscles also provide support for your back as well as other daily functions such as breathing and lifting.

This is because the pelvic floor muscles are used to help control the pressure in your abdominal cavity.

Impairments in one or more of these systems (pelvic floor muscles, abdominal muscles or respiratory diaphragm) increase the probability of problems such as incontinence, pelvic organ prolapse, low back pain, breathing or sexual dysfunction.

Physiotherapists trained in pelvic floor dysfunctions can help with specially designed exercises.

Pelvic floor muscles can be too weak, or they can be stretched too long from a prolonged increase in abdominal pressure. When this occurs they literally sag and fail

to support the organs of the pelvis. This can occur due to such things as pregnancy, constipation, improper lifting, chronic coughing, poor posture, pelvic and abdominal surgeries and occupations that require prolonged standing.

Pelvic floor muscles can also be too short, which will result in pain in the perineum, vagina, prostate, low back, abdomen, or cramping in the legs. This can be caused by tail bone injuries, low back injuries, child birth, and menopause to name a few.

Pelvic floor muscle exercise programs can be developed with a physiotherapist to help with all of the above conditions. These exercises are designed to address strengthening for weak or sagging muscles, and stretching/massage or balancing exercises to address the pain issues.

Physiotherapists trained in pelvic floor dysfunctions can help to ensure that the exercises are done correctly and effectively. Contact the Nova Scotia Physiotherapy Association (www.physiotherapyns.ca) to find a physiotherapist near you.

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