

## What is physiotherapy?

### Physiotherapy for older people

Physiotherapy helps to restore movement and function if you are affected by injury, illness, or disability.

### What is physiotherapy in mental health?

Physiotherapy is designed to “help people with mental illness use physical approaches to improve their health” (Chartered Society of Physiotherapists 2002).

The Age UK County Durham Physiotherapy service is tailored to help people whose mental health is negatively impacted upon by a mobility problem; for example, a person with a long-term physical condition such as Parkinson's, or someone with a falls history. The service is also directed towards people who have a mental health condition such as dementia and is struggling to engage in mainstream physiotherapy services.

### How can physiotherapy help?

#### Physiotherapy can:

- Help you to maximise your full potential, by improving physical function and independence, as well as your psychological and social wellbeing
- promote and empower you to be as independent as possible
- educate you and your carer(s) on how to manage specific problems
- help identify if changes in your mental health or behaviour have a physical cause

#### Specialist mental health physiotherapists can help with:

- **Falls and balance problems** – Supporting anyone who has had multiple falls.
- **Poor mobility** - Carrying out mobility assessments, walking aid assessments and offering exercise advice and guidance.
- **Neurological problems** - Supporting people with problems after a stroke or as a result of illnesses such as Parkinson's disease or Multiple Sclerosis.
- **Respiratory problems** - Helping those living with respiratory illnesses such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease or temporary conditions like chest infections to implement effective breathing techniques, and master inhalers.
- **Pain management** - Offering guidance and advice, including non-pharmacological interventions.

### What does a physiotherapy assessment look like?

Your initial contact with the physiotherapy team will involve an assessment to determine the level of your ability and what needs you may have. A plan of action called an 'intervention plan' will be created and agreed with you, your carer or family to address your individual needs. Further treatment may then be carried out by a physiotherapy team member in accordance with your plan(s).

**Call 0191 386 3856 or email  
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