



Physiotherapy

Physiotherapists help your muscles work the best they can

Physiotherapists (or Physios) work with you to build your muscle strength and correct any soreness. A Physio will try to reduce discomfort through massage and teaching you the best way to move your body. They want to increase the independence of their clients to move about the world.

You would usually see a physiotherapist at their clinic, but some will come to your home. You may see them regularly for a short time to work on one body area, or you may see them over a long time if you are building or losing muscle regularly.

About Physiotherapy

Physiotherapists have either an undergraduate or master's degree and must be registered with AHPRA (Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency) to be able to support people in Australia. While all physios can support you, they all have different personalities, experiences, and expertise. They might specialise in physical disability, intellectual disability, or working with children. It is important to choose a physio that you trust to truly understand you.

Some people find meeting a new therapist or health professional hard. It is important to remember that it can take time to build a relationship where you trust your health therapists.

All physiotherapists are different. Some may be great for your friends and family but may not be right for you.

What a physiotherapy report usually includes

A physiotherapy report might be helpful in your NDIS planning or review meeting. A good report might mean the right amount of funding and some assistive technology, but a poor quality report might mean you don't get enough supports to live your life independently.

When it is time for your plan review, make sure your Physiotherapist writes a report of the work you have done together. You may need to remind them as they often have a lot of clients.

Good reports;

- > Make clear recommendations for funding, including expected outcomes
- > Relate the recommendations to your NDIS goals
- > Use language the NDIS uses, such as "reasonable and necessary"
- > Provide evidence for any requested funding of hours, and assistive technology
- > Show the progress you have made during your current NDIS plan

What Physiotherapists can (and can't) do for you

If you are preparing for your first NDIS plan, the first person doing your assessment may be an independent assessor and not your usual healthcare professional. See more about independent assessors below/on next page/wherever it ends up.

- ✓ A Physio can recommend equipment or other activities that the NDIS can pay for
- ✓ A Physio will work with you on one or many areas of your body
- ✓ You Physio may give you exercises or stretches to do at home
- ✗ You may not get everything your Physio recommends if it is not explained well to the NDIA
- ✗ Your Physio will not recommend equipment you want if you do not need it

Here are some questions that might help you choose your Physio:

- > Are you registered with AHPRA?
- > What is your experience working with people with my disability?
- > Will you talk to my other professionals (i.e. doctor) to develop a plan that considers all the different parts of my life?
- > Do you offer home visits?
- > How often do you think I will need to see you?
- > Will you set goals with me?
- > Will you consider my NDIS goals in your assessment?



Your rights and entitlements

- > You have the right to an interpreter to make sure you understand what is being said.
 - There can be many questions, talking, and explaining during a physiotherapy appointment
 - If an interpreter is needed for a family member or carer, explain that this is important so that they can be involved in the conversation, and can support you to follow up on advice.
 - The physio may be able to organise this, but sometimes you may have to organise this yourself.
 - You can ask to have any reports or documents translated for you or your primary carer.
- > You are entitled to the support and care of a trustworthy professional who will work with you to reach your goals.
- > If your physio report is missing key information - such as goals - you have the right to ask the physio to change the report.

Chronic Health Care Plan Entitlement

A Medicare card entitles you to 5 sessions with Allied health professionals that are subsidised by the Government. The 5 sessions can be all with 1 type of professional, or 1 session with 5 types of professionals. This can help to make seeing allied health more affordable. You will need to see your GP or doctor for a referral to a professional. This is called a Chronic Disease Management Plan.

How your physiotherapist can help with NDIS planning and review meetings

Your physiotherapist can produce a report based on your progress toward the goals in your NDIS plan. This might be as a formal assessment or an update report for the NDIA and can request different or additional supports that you need.



What is Telehealth?

You can ask your Physiotherapist if you can have your appointment over the phone or on video. This is available for people who live far away, or cannot get to their appointments because of disability, mental health, or self-isolation.

During the Covid-19 Pandemic in 2020, Telehealth became more common and available to more people in Australia.

Independent Assessments

The NDIA may ask you to participate in an independent assessment. The assessment will determine how much funding will be in your NDIA plan, based on your support needs. The assessor will be an allied health professional (e.g. OT, Physiotherapist, Social Worker) that has not worked with you before. The assessors are not employees of the NDIA. They work independently. The NDIA has developed this assessment to make sure everyone in the NDIS have an assessment of their needs, even if they cannot afford it themselves. The NDIA pays for the independent assessment.

START HERE

Steps for using a Physiotherapist

1
Receive physio funding in your plan

2*
Find a Physio that is confident with your support needs

3*
Share your NDIS plan, goals, preferences, and support needs with your Physio

4
Meet your Physio at their clinic or your home

5
Practice the skills they teach you, and use any equipment they recommend

6*
Make sure the progress report they give you is correct and talks about your progress towards your goals

7*
NDIS review meeting

* If you have a Support Coordinator, they will organise these with you.

How to ask for Physiotherapy in your NDIS plan

You may be able to get physiotherapy paid for in your NDIS plan if your disability affects your movement in a way that means you cannot work, live your life in the community, socialise, or reach any of your other goals. You may need an assessment and a letter from your doctor for this. You will need to explain how your disability impacts your movement, and how a physiotherapist will help.

There are many reasons why a person may not use all of the funding in their NDIS plan. These include long waitlists for health therapists, or if you are sick and are not having your regular supports.

This is OK and doesn't mean you will get less money in your next plan. When you have your annual Plan Review, make sure that you tell your planner you have some unspent money in your NDIS plan.

Making a complaint

If you are not happy with your physio's report, you can discuss this with your physio, or their manager.

If you are not happy with your physiotherapist, or how they are behaving, you can make a complaint to their manager, or a specific complaints' manager within the organisation.

If you think that there has been a serious problem, or you are not happy with how the organisation has handled your complaint or concern, you have 3 options for complaints.

1. If you are making a complaint about the charges to your NDIS plan, or you believe they are not supporting you to work toward your NDIS goals, you can complain to the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) Quality and Safeguards Commission directly. It exists to support you with your concerns and to help improve services for all people with disability.

You can contact them on:

- ☎ 1800 035 544 TTY: 133 677
- ✉ contactcentre@ndiscommission.gov.au
- 💻 www.ndiscommission.gov.au
- ✍ NDIS Quality and Safeguards Commission
PO Box 210, Penrith, NSW, 2750



2. If you are making a complaint to get an explanation, apology, refund, or a change in policy/practice, you can make a complaint to the Victorian Health Complaints Commissioner. The VHCC handle all major complaints about health services in Victoria.

You can contact them on:

- ☎ 1300 582 113 TTY: 131 450
- 💻 www.hcc.vic.gov.au
- ✍ In-Person or by Mail: Level 26, 570 Bourke Street, Melbourne Victoria 3000.
To make time for your visit, call 1300 582 113.



3. If you are making a complaint because you think the physio's behaviour puts other people at risk or is unsafe, you can make a complaint to AHPRA (Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency). It can review a physio and their ability to practise.

You can contact them on:

- ☎ 1300 419 495
- 💻 www.ahpra.gov.au
- ✍ AHPRA, GPO Box 9958, Melbourne, VIC 3001



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