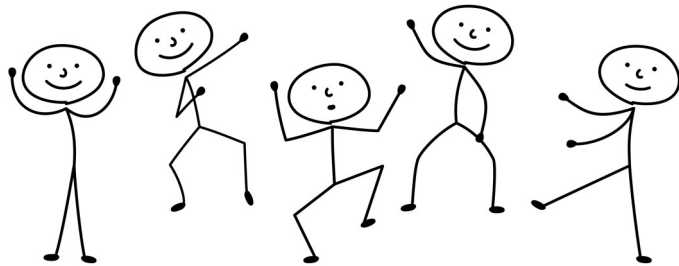


## The last appointment

Discuss with your physiotherapist what to do in the future if things don't improve or if they get much worse. Discuss whether there are any activities it would be helpful to modify or stop.

You might want to ask about other clinics, or about other local services, that might be able to help you further, for example occupational therapy or pain management services. Maybe ask if there are any local support groups that might be worth joining, or any websites or blogs that might be worth following.

Finally, reflect on your progress with your physiotherapist. It's important for both of you to jointly consider how effective your treatment has been.



## After your episode of care

It's important you don't stop working on improving your health condition and situation once your episode of physiotherapy care finishes.

Keep going with any exercises you have been advised to do and think about how you might stay active lifelong. You might consider joining a local fitness group, a walking group or exercising at home with a video. Whatever works for you.

Hopefully you will have learnt some techniques which you can use to manage your situation going forward. You may want to think about how you can use, and adapt, these techniques in your everyday life.

Tina  
[www.livingwellpain.net](http://www.livingwellpain.net)



With thanks to NHS Consultant Physiotherapist Matthew Low,  
Royal Bournemouth and Christchurch Hospitals, UK

Version 1.0

## Making the most of physiotherapy

This leaflet has been developed by a physiotherapy patient to support people who are about to attend, or who are currently attending, physiotherapy.



The text is a summary of an article called

'Making the most of physiotherapy'

which can be found at:

[www.livingwellpain.net/making-the-most-of-physiotherapy](http://www.livingwellpain.net/making-the-most-of-physiotherapy)

*The ideas are based on one patient's experience with physiotherapy. Everyone is different—some ideas may work for you, others may not!*

*Although this leaflet has been written about physiotherapy, many of the ideas will also work if you are being seen by other MSK professionals such as rehabilitation therapists, osteopaths, advanced practitioners, extended scope practitioners etc.*

## Understanding more about physiotherapy

Before starting physiotherapy it may be worth learning more about what physiotherapists can do to help you.

The UK Chartered Society of Physiotherapists (CSP) website provides patients with basic information about what physiotherapists do. Their website can also help you find a physiotherapist.

<https://www.csp.org.uk/public-patient>



## What can I expect from physiotherapy?

All conditions are different. Some conditions may resolve quickly and completely, whereas others may require more patience. Sometimes it is impossible to fully resolve a person's condition.

In this case, physiotherapists can work with you to help you develop strategies to live well with your condition, including where necessary to live well with pain. Utilising a range of strategies can mean your experience of your condition, including any pain, improves.

It will be important for you and your physiotherapist to discuss and clarify expectations.

## Before the first appointment

Make sure you think about what you want to say before you attend your first appointment. In most cases the physiotherapist will have received some basic information about you, but they will almost certainly want to know much more in order to get the best understanding of you and your condition.

Think about how your condition affects your life, and what you might like support with to achieve again. Having clear goals will be helpful. Also think about what you expect from physiotherapy. It's ok not to know.

It may help both you and your physiotherapist if you write down your thoughts before your first appointment. Stick to one page of A4 (or less) so they have a chance of reading it at the beginning of the appointment.

## During appointments

At the start of an appointment give your physiotherapist any writing you have done for them. Don't forget your physiotherapist is there to work in partnership with you. They aren't there to just tell you what to do! Be prepared for discussions to be wide ranging and not just focussed on your affected body part.

If you don't understand something, then ask your physiotherapist to explain again, maybe in a different way. Ask your physiotherapist about different treatment options. Work as a team and make decisions together.

At the end make sure you understand what you have agreed to do before next time. Ask for anything to be written down or videoed if it will help.

## In-between appointments

Chances are you will have been given some exercises to do, or some other things to do or try before the next appointment. Consider working out a schedule to fit them in. If you want to get the most out of your care then make sure you follow the plan you made with your physiotherapist.

Be pro-active, take the opportunity to continue learning about your condition. If you don't understand anything you discover then you can discuss it with your physiotherapist at the next appointment.

Continue to think about what difficulties your condition is causing you so that you can discuss these next time. Also reflect on improvements.

## Before the next appointment

Just before your next physiotherapy appointment, reflect on your progress since the last one. Be honest with yourself!

Reflect on practical things you have found difficult since your last appointment. Consider whether the physiotherapy sessions are helpful for you. If not then try to think why.

Think through if there is anything from the last session, or your learning in between sessions, that you don't understand.

Consider writing down your thoughts so that you can give them to your physiotherapist at the start of your next session.