

Physiotherapy can make a crucial difference to quality of life.

Key areas physiotherapists focus on include improving and building the gross motor skills of participants and strategies to address medical conditions and diagnoses.

This factsheet provides a useful overview.

It helps you to recognize the appropriateness of physiotherapy for Participants.



Gross motor skills

Does your Participant have difficulties with gross motor skills?

Do they want to do better or more physical activity?

Gross motor skills are large movements involving the whole body.

Physiotherapy can help improve these movements.

Key movements

Maintain a position

- sitting
- standing

... and still able to move & do things

- bend down to pick up object from the floor
 - reach out to grab a cup
 - stand in a queue and be able to look around
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High level mobility for everyday function (many different ways to walk)

- walk backwards
- step to one side
- turn around
- walk up and down stairs or slopes
- walk over obstacles, walk on a narrow line, walk around in a crowded room, walk on a slippery or uneven surface

Transfer/change from one position to another

- rolling
 - sit up from lying
 - get up from the floor
 - getting up from a chair
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Mobility skills

- crawling
 - walking
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High level mobility for sports, fun and enjoyment/leisure activity

- walk
- run
- jump
- hop,
- bike riding

Identifying gross motor skill challenges or problems

- Does your Participant have a bad posture or a rigid posture in sitting or standing?
- Does your Participant look awkward or unsteady when they do any or some of these tasks? Need a risk of falling assessment?
- Any difficulties with walking: very slow speed, or can only walk a short distance or duration?
- Would your Participants like to participate in sports, dance?
- Does your Participant suffer from stiffness or pain?
- Does your Participant get short of breath easily?



Medical conditions and diagnoses

There are a number of common conditions and medical diagnoses that can benefit from physiotherapy

These include the following:

Other health related problems:

- Overweight or obesity - people with intellectual disability, autism or cerebral palsy have a higher incidence of overweight or obesity
- Pain – help with pain management
- Decreased general fitness:

5 components of physical fitness that make up total fitness:

- (1) cardiovascular endurance
- (2) muscular strength
- (3) muscular endurance
- (4) flexibility
- (5) body composition.

Neurological conditions:

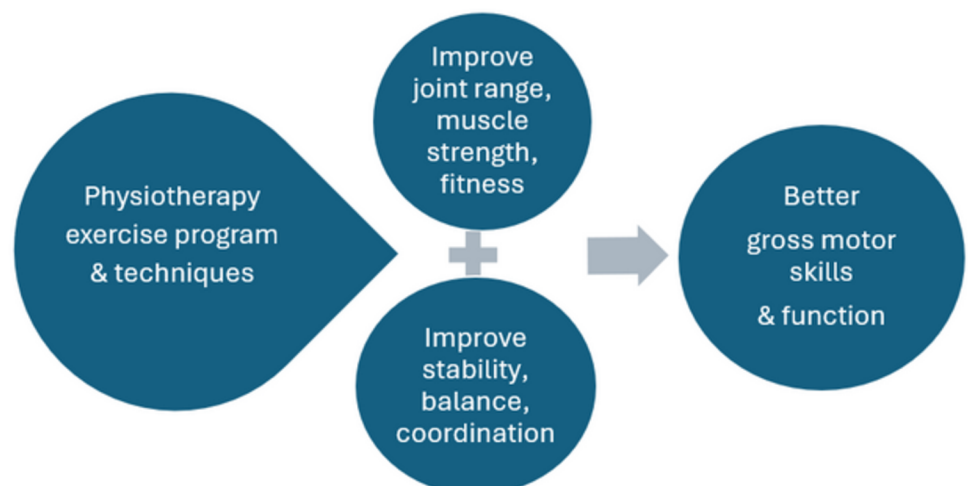
- Cerebral palsy
- Genetic conditions that affect a child's gross motor development from birth
- Muscular Dystrophy
- Stroke/hemiplegia
- Multiple sclerosis
- Parkinson's disease
- Intellectual disability or Autism: some have them may also have difficulties with gross motor skills

Lung conditions:

- Chronic lung diseases (eg COPD/chronic obstructive pulmonary disease)
- Asthma

How the physio can help:

Work out an exercise program for the Participant



Different types of exercise programs

- Exercise and rehabilitation programs at home or at a gym
- Hydrotherapy/aquatic physiotherapy program
- Fun and exercise
 - eg Music and movement
 - Assistance to access sports program in the community.

Improve functional skills

These include:

- Move around in bed or getting out of bed, walk faster or longer distances,
- Walk with better balance means less risk of falling and better able to walk outdoor
- Enjoy physical activities → socialize more, fresh air, lifts one's mood, better mental health



Assess and prescribe appropriate equipment for the Participant

- Seating and positioning
- Standing and walking aids
- Special equipment to make crawling easier (for young kids)
- Special tricycles with supportive seating and assistive steering (for any age group)
- Wheelchair prescription – help to pass on information to the OTs

The physio can make suggestions on what equipment is suitable, arrange a home trial, get a quote and do an application to NDIS for funding.

Training support network

- Train Support Worker and family members to carry out exercise program. Support workers can assist the participant to do the exercises regularly.
- It gets the best results when the physio can work together with a reliable and skilled support worker. This is the Hearth way!
- Provide support for the Participant's inclusion in mainstream schooling and help to train school staff.