

# Three Telltale Signs It's Time to See Your Physiotherapist

Your physiotherapist has a wide variety of skills and can help treat so much more than just pain and injury. Here are a few reasons to visit your physiotherapist that can keep you healthy and pain-free, before injury strikes.

## Stiffness and Inflexibility

Almost all of us have experienced pain and stiffness after a day of increased or unaccustomed exercise. This kind of stiffness usually wears off quickly and is referred to as DOMS (delayed onset muscles soreness). However, if you find yourself feeling stiff for more extended periods, or even most the time – it might be time to see a physiotherapist. There are many different causes of stiffness and inflexibility; by far, the most common is lack of movement. Our joints and muscles both lose flexibility if not moved through their range regularly. Muscle stiffness can feel like a tightness with a bouncy feeling of restriction, and joint stiffness can create a hard 'blocked' feeling when you try to move.

When it comes to stiffness the evolves from lack of movement, you may not even notice that you have lost range, as it can be very easy to adapt your movements to compensate. Your physiotherapist can help you to identify where you have areas of inflexibility and help you to exercise, stretch and mobilise your joints to get them back to a healthy range. Disease processes such as Osteoarthritis and Rheumatoid Arthritis can also cause prolonged stiffness, and your physiotherapist is well equipped to help you deal with these conditions.

## Reduced Strength or Weakness

There are many reasons for weakness in the body, from generalised disuse, weakness in one muscle group following an injury, neurological weakness or structural weakness of joint following a ligament tear. Musculoskeletal deficiency of any kind can predispose you to future injuries and can be surprisingly difficult to resolve without targeted exercises. Your physiotherapist can determine the cause of your weakness and determine the best treatment to restore your muscle strength.

## Reduced Balance

Keeping your balance is a very complicated process, and your body works hard to make sure you stay on your feet. Humans have a very small base of support for our height, and we use all our senses together to determine which movements we should make to stay upright, including our visual, vestibular, muscular and sensory systems. As balance is so essential for walking, if one system that supports our balance begins to weaken, the others will quickly compensate, so you may not notice that your balance has worsened until you fall or trip over more often.

As a general rule, balance does deteriorate as we age, but this does not mean that falling should be an inevitable part of aging. Actively working to maintain or improve your balance can have a significant effect on your quality of life and confidence in getting around. Your physiotherapist is able to test all the aspects of your balance and provide effective rehabilitation to help keep you on your feet.

**The information in this article is not a replacement for proper medical advice. Always see a medical professional for**

**an assessment of your condition.**

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