

# The Institute of Physical Therapy

Physical therapy is a treatment that focuses on the manual treatment of the soft tissue, muscles, tendons, ligaments and fascia. Physical therapists use highly skilled, hands on techniques to diagnose, prevent or treat underlying conditions and problems. It is based on health science principles and works extremely well alongside other health care practices.

Physical therapy has been shown to be very effective in the treatment of chronic pain (CP) issues. A research study showed that 81 per cent of sufferers, who found that their work had previously been hindered by pain, noticed an improvement in their ability to do their job. This is further backed up by figures showing 58 per cent returning to their sport of choice following treatment.

Anne Mangan of The Institute of Physical Therapy believes that this type of treatment is of particular value to patients suffering from chronic whiplash or lower back pain. A common problem with this type of injury or pain is that it generally will cause a patient to cut down on regular activities; this, in turn, creates a worse cycle. A physical therapist places a huge emphasis on improving mobility and encouraging sufferers to take part in activities that will aid their recovery. The focus is very much on becoming more active, which will lessen the pain. Physical therapists also look at treating and lengthening tightened muscles. In addressing seating in the workplace and various other daily scenarios, the therapist can dramatically

improve chronic conditions of this nature.

It is in these instances that a hands on approach of physical therapists is particularly effective. It is worth noting, at this point, that you will not need a referral to seek this course of treatment and that many of the patients who visit the Institute of Physical Therapy will have tried other methods of treatment. In doing this, they will very often have been told that nothing is wrong with them, which will cause them to feel that they are malingering. A hands on approach means that the practitioner can feel the shortened, tightened, contracted muscles and understand the issue particular to them. This can have a great effect on the emotional state of the patient. When people see a consultant or a specialist, it is understandable that they will treat it with deference to their specialty only. However, for the patient, it doesn't mean that there is nothing there - just that they can't put a name on it.

"As someone who suffers from chronic back pain myself, I was very heartened to hear an expert view on the range of alternative treatments available to me. It would seem that the natural instinct of protecting an injury does far more harm physiologically than good. A physical therapist is an excellent option for those who find themselves hindered by long-term pain. For older patients, this is also an excellent course of treatment that will empower them to remain active and will prevent further deterioration and tissue damage," Mangan concludes.