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East Boundary Road Physiotherapy

Neck pain: Management through physiotherapy

At any given time, 10% of Australians are thought to be suffering chronic neck pain. Neck pain is therefore a common complaint managed by physiotherapists and the need for effective management is clear. There is considerable evidence to support the benefits of musculoskeletal physiotherapy in reducing acute and chronic neck pain. Physiotherapy treatment for your patients encompasses a variety of interventions such as manipulative therapy, therapeutic exercise, electro-physical modalities, ergonomics and education.

Increasingly the scientific literature is suggesting that physiotherapy is an effective and efficient mode of treating many forms of neck pain and neck related headaches. There is growing scientific evidence to support the use of early and intensive physiotherapy in those with neck pain and also Whiplash Associated Disorders.

The generally suggested treatment regimen includes some amount of limited 'hands-on' or physical treatment, but heavily emphasises the important role of expert guidance and advice regarding such issues as activity levels, ergonomics, return to work and sport as well as in the prescription of specific exercises.

Cervical spondylosis can of course not be cured or reversed by physiotherapy, but effective ways of managing such problems and the associated aches, pains and functional limitations exist at the hands of skilled physiotherapists. Such management issues as ergonomics, posture, pillows and functional adaptations can provide effective solutions.

General and more specific exercise has long been the hallmark of the physical management of all things arthritic, and similarly in the management of arthritic related neck pain, the judicious prescription of neck and more general whole body activity and exercise can be a safe, effective, tolerable and cost efficient management tool. Growing evidence mounts in the medical literature that, particularly as more and more of the medications typically used in the past to manage arthritic pain have been either withdrawn or increasingly cautioned against, physical management is essentially the front line, and best ongoing mode of management for such patients. Physiotherapists are well skilled and widely accepted as experts in providing such treatment and management programs while working in a multidisciplinary approach to provide best patient care.

All APA physiotherapists participate in continuing professional development to keep them up to date with the latest in physiotherapy techniques and leading research-based treatment.

References
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Whiplash: early intervention to prevent chronic whiplash

WAD (Whiplash-Associated Disorder) is a misunderstood and painful problem. Around a third of road accidents result in a whiplash injury and tens of thousands of Australians experience it each year at great cost. Early, active physiotherapy intervention, combined with education and psychological support, can help prevent acute whiplash developing into a chronic injury.

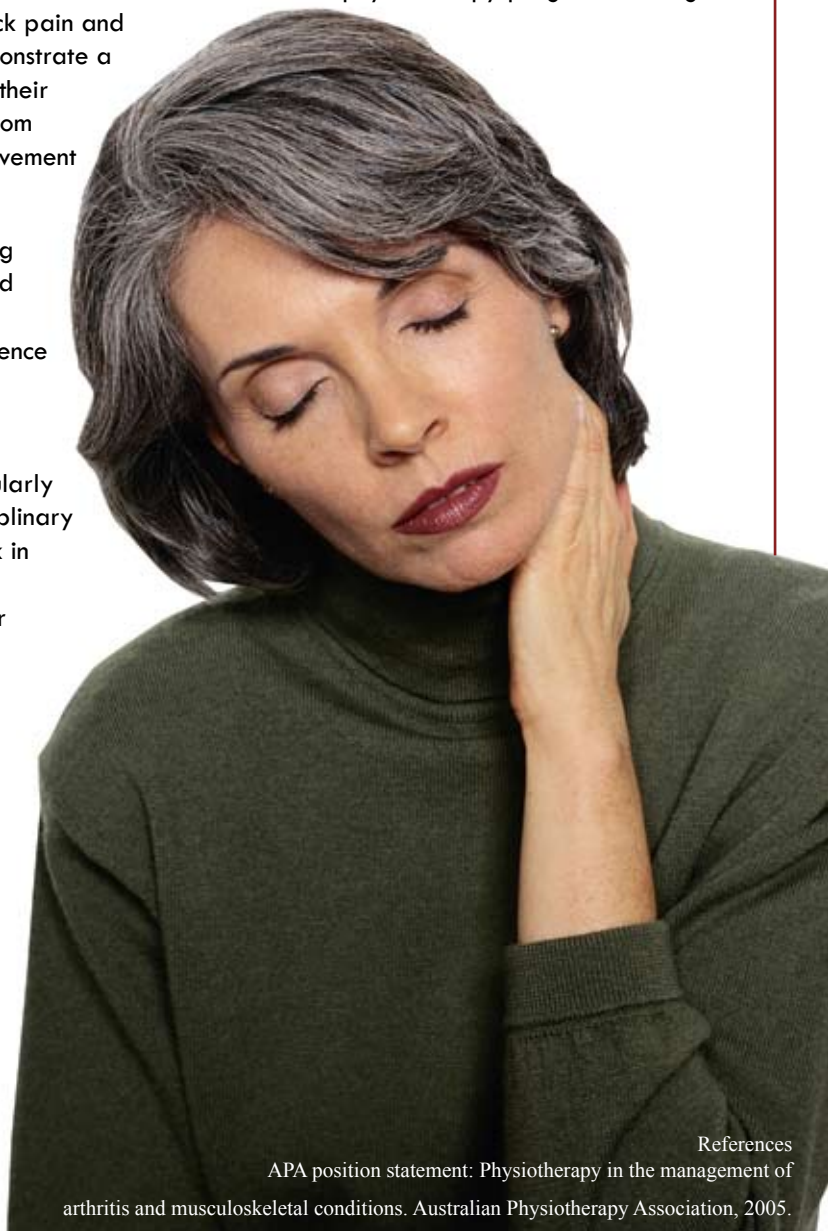
Physiotherapy researchers in Queensland have determined that a patient's condition three months after the initial injury is a stronger predictor of longer-term outcome than the severity of the injury itself. Symptoms (including pain, dizziness and restricted neck movement) evident three to six months post-injury are likely to lead to a chronic condition of whiplash.
Early, active intervention is critical. One study reports that pain intensity and sick leave are significantly reduced if patients receive active intervention (frequent active cervical rotation with assessment and treatment), and that long term recovery of total cervical range of motion is reliant on the active intervention being received soon after injury. Overseas trials have also found a multi-modal physiotherapy approach combining postural training, manual technique and psychological support delivers greater benefits to patients than using physical agents only.

Patients with WAD being treated using a multi-modal approach were found to return to work sooner and reported greater and longer lasting benefits of their treatment. Australian research on the benefits of a multi-modal physiotherapy program is being undertaken at the University of Queensland's world leading neck pain and whiplash research unit. The physiotherapists in our practice demonstrate a depth of knowledge, clinical reasoning and clinical judgment in their practice of physiotherapy techniques to relieve pain resulting from whiplash injuries, and provide effective treatment to restore movement and function.

Being patient-focused practitioners, we invest quality time during consultations to ensure patients understand the benefits, risks and alternatives to proposed treatment. We also provide realistic advice to encourage self-management and build patient confidence to cope with their injury.

We can help

As highly trained health professionals, our physiotherapists regularly work with medical and other health professionals in a multidisciplinary approach to patient care. We welcome the opportunity to work in partnership with you to deliver the highest quality and most effective physiotherapy services as part of a treatment plan for your patients with acute and chronic WAD.



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