



Keeping
British Columbians
Moving for Life

PHYSIOTHERAPY ASSOCIATION OF BC

Workplace Injuries

Workplace injuries are serious, not only because they can cause pain and compromise mobility, but also because a serious injury on the job can mean significant lost work and income. A physiotherapist can help you get back to work safely, will treat you from the date of your injury, and will help you return to work as quickly and safely as possible. Common workplace injuries range from repetitive stress, carpal tunnel syndrome, and back and neck pain, to major wrist and hand, shoulder, knee and ankle injuries for more physical work.

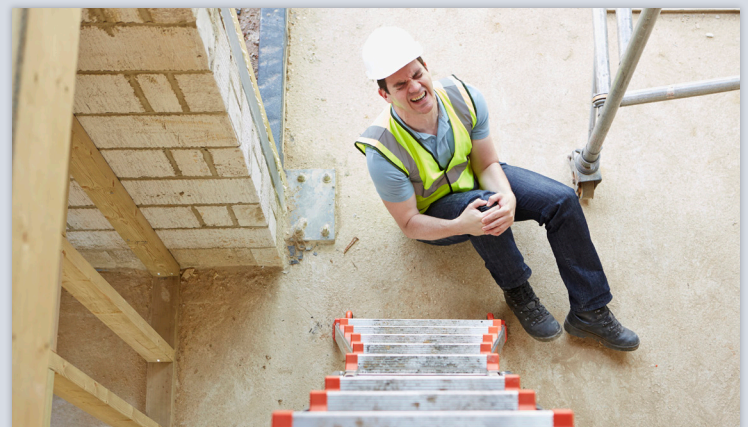
How Physiotherapy Helps Injured Workers

After a workplace injury, a physiotherapist will work with you on a customized program to minimize long-term damage and help you heal faster. Under a new agreement with WorkSafe BC, an injured worker and your employer can now work directly with a physiotherapist on a return-to-work plan, based on functional assessments that make sure you get back on the job in a safe and timely manner.

Who are Physiotherapists?

Physiotherapists are university trained medical professionals who are specialists in musculoskeletal conditions, and are qualified to assess and treat the conditions that are affecting your body's movement system and function.

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Practical Tips

- **Sprains and strains.** Early on, relative rest is key. In the early stages, you should rest your injured muscles to ensure the small muscle fibers that have been damaged have time to heal properly. While stretching is not recommended in early stages, your physiotherapist will advise on the use of heat or ice for pain management, and may also use treatments such as electrotherapy, acupuncture and manual therapy to reduce healing time.
- **Protect injured areas.** The challenge of having an injury is that you often still need to use the injured area in everyday life or work. This sometimes doesn't allow the injury to heal, and that's when your physiotherapist will use splinting or braces. Hand strains, for instance, can take a long time to heal, as it's hard to rest this area of the body. A physiotherapist will tape or brace a strained area so that you can keep moving while your body heals.

- **Back support.** Workers should ensure your work areas are set up properly to encourage optimal posture. Sitting at desks or on equipment all day puts increased pressure on your spine. After 30 minutes of sitting, whether the job requires prolonged standing or sitting, you should vary your position and also make sure you walk around to keep the flow of blood and fluids to the spine and joints.
- **Protect joints.** If you have degenerative changes in your knees (e.g. osteoarthritis), a physiotherapist can show you how to protect your joints to prevent workplace injuries and to maintain mobility at work. Your physiotherapist will prescribe exercises to improve the strength of supporting muscles, provide ergonomic advice, and assess footwear.



For more information

To find a physiotherapist best for you, visit the PABC's website at www.bcphysio.org or download the **Find a Physio** app.

