

# Press release

*For immediate release*

29 June 2023

## World PT Day will focus on arthritis and forms of inflammatory arthritis

The focus for this year's World PT Day on 8 September is arthritis, with an in-depth look at some forms of inflammatory arthritis, including rheumatoid arthritis and axial spondyloarthritis. This follows on from the theme for 2022, which focused on osteoarthritis.

The campaign is focused on the following key messages.

- Arthritis is defined as an acute or chronic joint inflammation. Symptoms can include pain, swelling, stiffness, and redness which may contribute to reduced function and dexterity. Arthritis isn't a single condition; there are many different types.
- It can affect people of all ages and physical fitness – including children, teenagers, and athletes. Some forms of arthritis are more common in older people.
- The symptoms of arthritis can vary from week to week, and even from day to day. It can also affect people in different ways and each condition will have specific symptoms. However, with the right treatment and approach, you can manage your symptoms and live well.
- Regular physical activity and exercise are important in the management of all forms of inflammatory arthritis (IA), including rheumatoid arthritis (RA) and axial spondyloarthritis (axial SpA), and offer numerous health benefits.
- Physiotherapy is an important part of your overall treatment. A physiotherapist will guide you on how to exercise safely, increase your activity levels, set goals, and find the right balance between rest and activity.
- It's important to stay active and keep moving when you have arthritis. Physiotherapists are part of a multidisciplinary team that can help you manage your arthritis. They will be able to assess your condition and abilities and guide you on how to keep active and help manage your symptoms.
- People with RA and other inflammatory joint disorders have an increased risk of cardiovascular disease (CVD). Healthy lifestyle choices, including regular physical activity, are important in the management of RA to reduce the risk of CVD.
- People with axial SpA should be referred to a physiotherapist to start an individualised, structured exercise programme that is tailored to you to help maintain spinal flexibility, whole body flexibility, and

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reduce pain. Even when you have pain, continuing to exercise at levels that suit you has significant benefits.

- Only about a third of people living with OA will get worse over time, and some see an improvement in pain and disability. A physiotherapist will be able to guide you on how to keep active.
- Arthritis is often associated with older people, but it can also affect children. Most types of childhood arthritis are known as juvenile idiopathic arthritis (JIA). Physiotherapy forms an important role in the management of the symptoms of JIA and will help you/your child do the activities you like doing.

## **World PT Day toolkit**

The [World PT Day toolkit](#) includes a range of materials to share the campaign in your country/territory, including information sheets, posters, banners and an activities guide.

The materials are available now in [English](#) and will be available shortly in French and Spanish. Volunteer translators are working on versions of the materials in other languages, which will be uploaded to our website as they become available.

**Please note:** the World PT Day materials may not be amended without the permission of World Physiotherapy.

World Physiotherapy would like to express its sincere thanks to the following for their input and assistance in the production of the materials for World PT Day 2023: [Lindsay Bearne](#), [Andrew Briggs](#), [Jack March](#), and [MACP Rheumatology clinical interest group](#).

Please share the contents of this press release to your members, colleagues, and networks. If you have any further questions, please email [communications@world.physio](mailto:communications@world.physio).

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## **EDITOR'S NOTES**

### **About physiotherapy**

Physiotherapists are experts in developing and maintaining people's ability to move and function throughout their lives. With an advanced understanding of how the body moves and what keeps it from moving well, they promote wellness, mobility and independence. They treat and prevent many problems caused by pain, illness, disability and disease, sport and work related injuries, ageing and inactivity.

Physiotherapists are educated over several years, giving them a full knowledge of the body's systems and the skills to treat a wide range of problems. This education is usually university-based, at a level that allows physiotherapists to practise independently. Continuing education ensures that they keep up to date with the latest advances in research and practice. Many physiotherapists are engaged in research themselves.

### **About World Physiotherapy**

World Physiotherapy is the profession's global body representing over 600,000 physiotherapists from member organisations in 129 countries/territories. More information: [www.world.physio](http://www.world.physio)