

FUNCTIONAL NEUROLOGICAL DISORDERS

Physiotherapy

Factsheet

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Patients with Functional Motor Symptoms (FMS) such as limb weakness, gait problems or tremor can benefit from physical therapies. Physiotherapists focus on neuroplasticity to retrain the nervous system.

What is physiotherapy?

Physiotherapists help you get the most out of your life and help you with your day to day activities. They do this by promoting movement, physical activity and exercise and providing education and advice. For people with FND, they work within the multidisciplinary team to help you achieve your goals. It is important to find a physiotherapist you are comfortable working with and who has knowledge about treating FND.

How can physiotherapy help FND?

Physiotherapy can help you to both understand your symptoms and how you manage these symptoms yourself long term. Management will involve tailored plans bringing together biological,

psychological and social aspects to re-learn skills and improve your functional capacity. Together with your physiotherapist, you will discuss your plan to help manage expectations and keep therapy goal orientated.



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TREATMENT

Your physiotherapist will explore your symptoms and how you perform day to day activities to come up with an exercise program. Exercises are prescribed to help retrain movements and improve stamina. It is important to practice the exercises the physiotherapist prescribed you as practicing helps neuroplasticity in the brain. This is the brains ability to form new neural connections in response to new situations or changes in your environment.

Treating Symptoms

Physiotherapists can help treat a range of functional symptoms. They work within a team to provide you strategies to help sustain relearning how to perform movements. This will enable you to manage your symptoms independently.

This may take time as your brain retrains and neuroplasticity takes place.

Symptoms include:

- Body and limb weakness
- Tremors and tics
- Gait disturbances
- Changes in the feeling and awareness of your arms and legs
- Dizziness
- Dissociation

Useful Resources

FND Patient Workbook

- Go to <https://fndaustralia.com.au/>
⇒ Resources => Clinical Tools
- Click on the link to download the FND patient workbook

FND Education Videos

- Go to <https://fndaustralia.com.au/>
⇒ Resources
⇒ Educational Videos

Pacing

Pacing is the regulation of activity levels. The main purpose of pacing is to help you achieve goals rather than to avoid them. It is important to share with your treating team any barriers to achieving this balance and not to overdo or underdo activities. This is important as you may experience flare-ups or not see any improvements. Physiotherapists can help you learn and understand pacing and help you to implement it in your daily life.

FND Workbook

The key to successful treatment is to manage your symptoms independently long term. A great way to track your progress with your physiotherapist is with the help of the FND patient workbook. The workbook allows you and your therapist to work together to find strategies and activities that work for you. It also allows your to monitor, share and reflect on your progress with other people in your care team.

