

# PhysioBiz

*Health newsflashes*

*for bodies busy moving, working, playing, being.*



## **How can we help you?**

Tips for being a good – and therefore healthy – patient!

Healthcare is really a two-way street. When you have a health issue and seek help from a professional such as a physiotherapist, a fair amount of the quality of the outcome is up to you and what you do.

- **Be clear about the problem**

Sit quietly for a moment with a notebook and think through what the problem is and how you experience it – say, for example, it is lower back pain. Make a few notes: when did the problem start? Is it worse on waking or at the end of the day? What makes it worse – sitting, standing, walking? What kind of pain is it – dull, constant aching, or occasional sharp and piercing pain, for example?

- **Bring previous medical records with you**

Many of us who have musculoskeletal or neurological problems like back pain, shoulder problems or sports injuries will have had X-rays and other investigations done previously. They could help your physiotherapist understand the problem and assess if it's changed, so take them with you to a consultation.

- **Tell all**

Spend some time in advance of your appointment running through your medical history and getting it clear in your mind – make notes if need be. It's better to tell everything you can remember – you never know if that scar tissue from your appendectomy is somehow affecting the way your abdominal muscles work together. Dental problems can cause headaches and neck pain; a minor fender-bender can cause whiplash with minor pain that later results in seemingly unrelated pain or restrictions of mobility. Rather tell everything than leave something out because you think it's unimportant – leave it to the physio to be the judge of that!

- **Listen and ask questions**

Don't be afraid to ask questions when you get a diagnosis. A healthcare professional will understand that you may be worried and emotional, that you may not get what is being said immediately. Don't be afraid to ask for another explanation. And ask about the proposed treatment if you don't fully understand.

- **Be a doer as well as a listener**

“You don’t come for physio, you **do** physio!” as physiotherapist Alexa Pohl explains to her patients. To make the most of any kind of treatment, you have to comply with the therapy offered you – you must take the pills every day at the right time, for example.

Physiotherapists are particularly reliant on you to create your own health. They will diagnose and treat in their rooms, but then they’ll give you a set of exercises to do daily at home – often small movements, such as rolling your foot over a tennis ball or arching your back while lying on the floor. This is the other half of the therapy. If you don’t do the exercises, your outcome is likely to be much poorer. So be a doer! Your body will thank you.

#### CONTACT:

To find a physiotherapist close to you who can advise and provide you with a tailor-made programme of exercise, contact:

The South African Society of Physiotherapy

Website: [www.saphysio.co.za](http://www.saphysio.co.za)

Tel: 011 6153170

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