

Accessible and Convenient Therapy for Rehab Treatment at Home: Virtual Physiotherapy

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Introduction

For many of us, the forced experiment of pandemic-related home working may have meant 18 months without commuting and/or no need for stylish work attire. Less favorably, it resulted in the tyranny of back-to-back Teams/Zoom calls, a blurring of home and work life, and a rapid increase in musculoskeletal disorders for many workers, particularly those working from inefficient workstations or in confined living quarters.

Back, neck, and shoulder difficulties, as well as musculoskeletal problems in general, have been linked to the pandemic, according to studies. As a result, we've witnessed a huge increase in demand for online physiotherapy services, as both employers and employees have no choice but to engage digitally [1].

Virtual physiotherapy is a unique ability. You must truly adapt, and you must be willing to adapt. Although you aren't physically manipulating people's limbs, you may still accomplish a great deal virtually. Listening was always important, as was reassuring individuals, offering advice, and informing them of the diagnosis. That reassurance is quite effective. That, say, it's just back ache, and it'll go away in four weeks; this is what I'd like you to do. Keep moving as much as possible, as long as it isn't too painful, apply heat, and see your doctor or pharmacist if necessary," Clare says [2].

We've also teamed up with an exercise and rehab programme that individuals may download to their PC, tablet, or smartphone. It's all video-based, and we can monitor their pain levels, send them messages, and be notified if their pain levels are too high. This is also quite beneficial to clients. It has also aided people in taking greater responsibility for their recovery; it has aided them in doing the exercises; it is not a passive process.

We're seeing a lot of patients who have had spinal or limb disorders as a result of working from home; their personal and professional lives have become far too entwined, and perhaps they didn't have the necessary equipment or were working in an inefficient position. It's been a case of "we've just had to figure this out" because home-working has gone on for months at a time. We perform video consultations for physiotherapy and occupational health, ergonomics, DSE, and home assessment, and they send in images before they come, says the physiotherapist. On our system, everything is automated.

Someone provides a reference for a staff member, and we offer them a link to book themselves in, which sends them an automated confirmation email with a link to the consent form, and then they send in photos of their desk or work environment. When something comes through, we file it. We ask the physio if there are any issues beforehand, and then we go through the DSE and ergonomic exam. Clare explains, "Our reporting is precisely the same then [3]."

A Model for the Future that is Long-Term

Is the virtual physiotherapy model likely to persist post-pandemic, despite the UK gradually returning to workplace 'normalcy' (or, at the absolute least, a hybrid mix of home and office-based working)?

Clare hopes "Virtual physiotherapy is cost-effective; people are typically better at it, but it is also lot faster and better for organizations with dispersed staff. People are becoming much more receptive to these models."

To that reason, a blended approach to physiotherapy could be a likely future paradigm, just as hybrid working may become a more permanent change. "We truly enjoy virtual care; we believe in it and think it works incredibly well, and hence we're going to look into selling it more." "There are many more advantages," Clare says. And being able to claim she now runs an award-winning service has undoubtedly aided her, both during the pandemic and, hopefully, after it has passed. During the epidemic, the crew worked really hard; they were so adaptable and enthusiastic [4].

"Winning the award gave a significant lift in our morale. It has also been beneficial in terms of gaining recognition from other occupational health practitioners, as well as organizations and customers," she says.

References

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