

## How do I get an appointment?

If you are interested in receiving physiotherapy for your CFS/ME, please speak to your clinic doctor or any member of the service about a referral. Once you have been referred, you will receive an appointment letter inviting you to meet with a physiotherapist at the next available date.

## What will happen on my first visit?

The first visit to the physiotherapy department will last up to an hour and a half with breaks given if required. During this session you and the physiotherapist will assess your current situation. You will discuss the ways in which physiotherapy can address your needs and decide on the appropriate course of treatment. It may be that physiotherapy is not required and an onward referral within the multidisciplinary team is more appropriate. You will also have the opportunity to ask questions and raise any concerns.

## The Physiotherapy Programme

Physiotherapy can be delivered as part of a group therapy or in individual one to one sessions.

### Individual Sessions:

The number of sessions will depend on the course of treatment decided between the individual and the physiotherapist. The aim is to have a few regular sessions over the first month to plan activity. The follow up sessions are spaced further apart once the individual has begun to progress.

### Group Sessions:

These sessions are run by a team of physiotherapists and clinical psychologists. There is also input from dieticians and medical consultants.

The sessions are structured like a course and are focussed on providing you with information and skills to understand and manage your symptoms.

The group is run over 8 weeks with a closed membership of about 8 people.



## Physiotherapy and Chronic Fatigue Syndrome/ Myalgic Encephalopathy

Rehabilitation Unit  
Kenton and Lucas Wing  
St Bartholomew's Hospital  
West Smithfield  
London EC1A 7BE  
Tel: 020 7601 8240

## **Barts and the London CFS/ME service**

The chronic fatigue service at St Bartholomew's Hospital is a well established specialist service for people with CFS/ME. The comprehensive multidisciplinary outpatient service provides patients with evidence based treatments for their CFS/ME.

## **What is Physiotherapy?**

Physiotherapy is a healthcare profession concerned with improving physical ability, function and movement in a wide range of conditions (CSP).

## **Physiotherapy and CFS/ME**

People with CFS/ME often have many physical symptoms and may find it difficult to maintain a normal routine. Physiotherapists can provide advice and management strategies for these symptoms and can help to design specific programmes to rebuild activity and exercise tolerance.

With your physiotherapist you will set some personal goals which focus on activities and exercises that are important to you.

## **What will physiotherapy do for me?**

Physiotherapy is planned individually and is tailored to:

- Improve individual fitness
- Improve physical strength
- Improve health
- Achieve personal goals
- Improve understanding of condition

## **What may be covered during treatment?**

- Education to improve understanding of your condition
- Activity management and pacing
- Stretches
- Graded Exercise Therapy
- Sleep advice
- Relaxation
- Managing symptoms including pain and fatigue
- Managing setbacks
- Physical techniques for managing stress
- Planning a graded return to work

## **Evidence for Graded Exercise Therapy**

People are sometimes concerned about starting an exercise programme. Graded Exercise Therapy is well evidenced and is recommended in the NICE guidelines as an effective strategy for the management of CFS/ME. When prescribed properly by appropriately trained physiotherapists it can improve function with little or no adverse effects.

Bad experiences of exercise are usually related to exercise being poorly guided or starting at a level that is not manageable or maintainable (NICE 6.3.1.2)

- NICE, (National Institute for Clinical Excellence), 2007. *Clinical Guidelines: Chronic Fatigue Syndrome / Myalgic Encephalomyelitis*. [Online]. Available at: <http://guidance.nice.org.uk/CG53>
- Curriculum framework for qualifying programmes in physiotherapy (2002). Chartered Society of Physiotherapy (CSP)