

## What is Workcover?

Unfortunately one of the most common places to sustain an injury is at your workplace and certain industries are particularly at risk. These injuries can sometimes be severe enough to put you out of work for a period of time, which can be stressful especially if you are worried about losing your income as well as being in pain.

Because of the risk of injury in the workplace Workcover QLD has been established. The aim of Workcover is to look after people who have injured themselves at work, get them treatment so that they can get back to their jobs as soon as possible and to take the financial strain off them at the same time. Until you are required to make a claim you may not have even known that Workcover existed, for this reason it can be confusing as to exactly what you need to do.

Some of the good things that come out of the WorkCover process are that you can return to work quickly and safely, minimise disruption to your family, work and social life and alleviate concerns regarding employment and financial security. In addition to this you can decrease the time spent recovering from injury and reduce the amount that the injury affects your lifestyle.

It is in your Employer's best interest to help you get rehabilitation through WorkCover as this reduces staff turnover, improves staff morale and workplace industrial relations, minimises retraining expenses, reduces claims costs and helps an injured worker return to the workplace.



## Why have I been sent to see a Physiotherapist?

Often the injuries we sustain at work are physical ones, for this reason Physiotherapy is one of the best ways to get you feeling better faster and back to work. The first step in this process is to see your GP. You must see your GP before they can then send you on to see a Physiotherapist. The first thing we will do is to diagnose your injury, then we will use 'hands on' Physiotherapy techniques to help reduce your pain and get your joints moving properly. We will often give you a few things to do at home. This may be as simple as avoiding certain activities that 'stir up' your problem, or giving you exercises and stretches that will speed your recovery. Once you are beginning to feel better the focus switches to strengthening and job-specific training with the aim to get you back doing your job safely and avoiding re-injury.

Rehabilitation can include treatment, assessments of work capacity and suitable duties programs e.g. a person's rehabilitation may include a combination of physiotherapy, occupational therapy, counselling, suitable duties and training for new skills.

## What does my Physio need me to do?

**Attend appointments and notify your Physio and customer advisors when you are unable to attend appointments**

Participate in rehabilitation and suitable duties programs. This includes not only attending the clinic for 'hands on' treatments but also completing the exercises that are set out for you and adhering to any changes in activity that your Physio has deemed appropriate.

If you are having trouble adhering to any of the advice or exercises your Physio has given you, let them know and we will try and make it easier for you to follow and make changes as necessary.

Discuss the progress of rehabilitation activities with your health providers



## When can I return to work?

This will depend on the type and severity of injury and also what type of work you are returning to, a back injury in an industry where you are required to do heavy lifting will take longer to return to work than if you are primarily sitting at a desk. As a general rule we don't like to keep people out of their workplace longer than a week or two, even if they are only able to answer phones or help do some filing we will try and get them back into some type of productive work.

We also talk to your GP regularly and keep them up to date on your progress or any difficulties you are having. Together with your doctor we will guide your return to work, this is usually a gradual process building up over a few weeks.

## What happens if I can't do my usual job?

If you are unable to do your usual job, we will talk to your employer about finding what we call 'light duties' or 'suitable duties'. A suitable duties program (SDP) is designed to help you return to work safely and gradually through a supervised process at your workplace. It also helps you gain confidence while you recover from an injury.

The program matches your current abilities with appropriate work tasks and work hours while you are recovering. Your GP must approve the suitable duties program before you start it. SDPs are usually carried out at your current place of employment.

An example of an SDP may be working in the office for a few weeks rather than doing heavy lifting as a labourer. You may get frustrated doing this type of work especially as you start to feel better. The reason that we get you back doing light duties rather than staying at home is because statistics show that you are more likely to get better, faster than if you were to stay at home.

### What happens if my employer doesn't want me back at work until I'm completely better?

It is the responsibility of your employer to do everything they can to help get you back to work as soon as possible. Occasionally (especially if it is a small business) your employer may be just as new as you to the WorkCover process. Often employers have difficulty with finding tasks that fit in with the suitable duties program and they may need help with this process. If they seem unsure about what tasks to give you or the tasks they give you are in contradiction to the advice of your doctor or Physio, it may be worthwhile to talk to your Customer advisor who can help to make things clear. Your employer will try to get you back to work ASAP by keeping in regular contact with the customer advisor and injured worker, telling WorkCover when they are unable to find a suitable duties program in their workplace, having a workplace rehabilitation management policy and making every effort to provide suitable duties, no matter what the injured worker's injuries might be.

### Who is the best person to speak to if I have a query about the WorkCover Process?

A WorkCover Queensland customer advisor is the person who manages an injured worker's claim until their condition stabilises or the worker recovers from the injury. A customer advisor is responsible for working with you, your employer, your GP and your other health providers (e.g. your Physio) to set rehabilitation goals and develop a return to work plan. They work with us to make sure you receive timely and appropriate rehabilitation. They approve certain treatment costs and managing your benefits. The customer advisor is the central point of contact for all parties during the rehabilitation process. Workers, employers, doctors and health providers can contact the WorkCover Queensland customer advisor if they have any questions or concerns.

### Why do I have to keep seeing my GP regularly?

Your GP's role is to determine what type of treatment might help you get back to work faster, they also keep track of your improvement and we need their approval before you are able to return to work whether it is for light or full duties. It is important for your doctor to explain what is needed to enable them to return to work and to listen to any concerns you may have.

### What exactly do I need to do for my Workcover claim?

There are important things you must do whilst you are on WorkCover, if you don't you may not be paid your entitlements and it may affect the validity of your claim.

- Contact your Physio and/or your customer advisor if you change telephone or address or are unable to attend appointments. Also contact them if there are changes to your condition or compensation payments

**- Keep your Medical Certificates up to date. You can only receive WorkCover benefits if they have a copy of your current Medical Certificate**

- Inform WorkCover Queensland of a return to work of any kind while they are receiving compensation benefits.

- Send WorkCover Queensland copies of your Workers' Compensation Medical Certificates and rehabilitation receipts

- Quickly respond to any requests for information from WorkCover Queensland or health providers

- Complete and sign all necessary forms

### What happens if my claim is rejected?

We understand that when you have been injured you are placed under considerable financial strain, we try to alleviate this by generally invoicing WorkCover for your treatment rather than billing you directly. The validity of your claim is determined by WorkCover themselves and as such you must adhere to their requirements as outlined above. If however, your claim is rejected (this is very uncommon) it is your responsibility to pay the standing balance. In this situation we will require you to repay the treatment provided. We will discuss this with you and if there are financial problems arrangements can be made.



Information for our patients...



***Coastal Physiotherapy &  
Sports Injury Clinic***

**180 Napper Rd, Parkwood**

**Tel: 5574 4303**

If you have any further questions about any of the topics discussed in this brochure please do not hesitate to contact your Physio on 5574 4303 or WorkCover QLD on 1300 362 128