



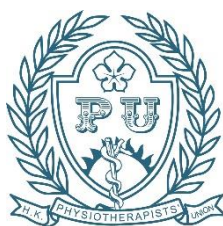
Scope of practice

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# PHYSIOTHERAPISTS' SCOPE OF PRACTICE

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in Hong Kong



HONG KONG PHYSIOTHERAPISTS' UNION

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- FIRST EDITION -



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# Scope of Physiotherapy Practice in Hong Kong

## Introduction

Physiotherapists (PTs) are important members of the health care team providing **quality professional intervention** to various indicated conditions of **clients at all ages**. PTs are uniquely qualified to **alleviate pain**, to **improve functional mobility**, and to **restore health**. The development and growth of physiotherapy education, service and research over the past years, together with the surging demands in various health care settings, have led to PT's professional obligation to consolidate the scope of practice for the emerging roles and responsibilities to meet the dynamics of the health care needs in Hong Kong.

***This edition of Scope of Practice of Physiotherapy is not exhaustive and will be under regular review and periodic update to meet the health needs according to local and international perspectives.***

## Background

### Physiotherapy

- Physiotherapy is a **non-invasive** and **non-medicated** health care intervention provided by physiotherapists by means of **manual therapy, physical agents** and **exercise prescriptions** for the **health and functional restoration** of clients **throughout their lifespan**.

### Physiotherapy Practice

- PTs are **autonomous, self-regulated** health professionals with the necessary university education and clinical experience to address the needs of **health care promotion** and **disease prevention**, both on an individual basis as well as at the community level. A registered physiotherapist is competent to provide full spectrum of roles and responsibilities **within the professional capacity** to **rehabilitate**, to **restore** and to **maintain optimal functional capacities** throughout the **lifespan** from new born to end of life.

### Scope of Practice

- Definition by the Canadian National Physiotherapy Advisory Group  
“... a profession’s scope of practice encompasses the services its practitioners are educated, competent and authorized to provide. The overall scope of practice for the profession sets the outer limits of practice for all practitioners. The actual scope of practice for the practice of individual practitioners is influenced by their continuing professional education, the settings in which they practice, the requirements of the workplace, and the needs of their patients or clients.”



## **Framework of Content**

The scope of physiotherapist practice includes but not limited to the followings,

- **Health Education to Public and Individual:**

- To prevent injuries, impairments, functional limitations, and disabilities including the promotion and maintenance of fitness, health, and quality of life in people of all ages.

- **Assessment:**

- To examine patients with impairments, functional limitations, and disability or other health related conditions in order to determine a diagnosis, prognosis, and intervention.

- **Treatment:**

- To alleviate impairments and functional limitations by designing, implementing, and modifying therapeutic interventions.



## **Physiotherapists' Clinical Scope of Practice:**

- Examine patients (with impairments, functional limitations, disability or other health related conditions)
- Perform tests and measurements
- Perform evaluations (with reference to medical history)
- Provide consultation within their trained expertise and determine when patients/clients need to be referred to another healthcare professional
- Identify potential and existing problems
- Establish a physiotherapy diagnosis
- Determine an effective treatment plan
- Provide interventions
- Evaluate the effect of those interventions for progression
- Modify treatment for effective outcome
- Provide health education in prevention and wellness (including fitness maintenance, health and quality of life programs)
- Engage in consultation, education and research
- Provide professional training and coaching
- Serve as administrators for professional related Policy Address and Implementation



## **Common Conditions for Physiotherapy**

- **General Pain Conditions**

s.a. spinal pain (neck, thoracic & lumbar), peripheral joint pain (upper & lower limbs), temporal mandibular joint pain

- **Musculoskeletal Conditions**

s.a. sports injuries, accidental sprains and strains of joints & ligaments, fractures and dislocations

- **Neurological Conditions**

s.a. traumatic/pathological brain conditions, Parkinson's disease, cerebral palsy, peripheral nerve injury, and neuropathy, Bell's palsy

- **Cardiopulmonary and Circulatory Conditions**

s.a. congestive heart failure, emphysema, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, lymphedema, and peripheral vascular disease

- **Occupational Health & Safety**

s.a. repetitive injuries, cumulative trauma, and stress disorders

- **Vestibular conditions**

s.a. vertigo

- **Endocrine conditions**

s.a. diabetes mellitus

- **Mental conditions**

s.a. dementia, depression, post-natal blues, SEN conditions

- **Surgical conditions**

s.a. pre- and post- operative needs

- **Arthritic Conditions**

s.a. osteoarthritis, rheumatoid arthritis, ankylosing spondylitis.

- **Women's Health**

s.a. ante- and post-natal care, stress incontinence

- **Men's Health**

s.a. bladder control

- **Systemic Diseases**

s.a. cancer and AIDS/HIV infection



## **Common Scopes of Physiotherapy Assessment**

### **S O A P** approach

through Subjective, Objective Assessment and Treatment Planning

- Sensory Motor Function such as voluntary postures and movement patterns
- Muscle Performance such as strength, endurance, coordination and functional activity
- Gait and Balance such as abnormal gait, disturbed balance, fall risk
- Neuromotor Development and Sensory Integration such as motor capabilities, acquisition and evolution of movement skills abilities across the life span
- Aerobic Capacity or Endurance such as degree of functional limitation or impairment in work capacity over time
- Ventilation, Respiration, and Circulation such as adequate ventilation pump, oxygen uptake, oxygen delivery system to perform activities of daily living, ambulation, and aerobic exercise





## **Common Scopes of Physiotherapy Intervention**

- Critical care and airway clearance techniques
- Exercise prescriptions for specific therapeutic effects
- Manual therapy techniques (including soft tissue technique, stretching & mobilization, manipulation)
- Physical agents, mechanical and thermal modalities (App. A)
- Application of indicated electrotherapeutic modalities (App. A)
- Dry needling, cupping, moxibustion.
- Functional rehabilitation to optimize selfcare and home management (including activities of daily living and instrumental activities of daily living)
- Functional training in community or work reintegration
- Prescription and application of assistive, adaptive, supportive / protective devices and equipment
- Patient-related instruction for self-care empowerment, health education for preventive measures, care giver training.



## **Common Physiotherapy Settings**

The diversity of settings in which physiotherapists' practice reflects the versatility of professional knowledge and skills and the broad scope of public's need for comprehensive health care.

- **Hospitals**
- **Rehabilitation Centers**
- **Non-Government Organizations**
- **Hospices**
- **Private Clinics**
- **Domiciliary**
- **Aged Homes**
- **Sports Institutes**
- **Fitness / Activities Centers**
- **Schools & Institutes**
- **Work / Occupational Environments**
- **Corporate or Industrial Health Centers**
- **Academic / Research Centers**

## Electrotherapy (EPT) / Electrophysical Modalities

Electrotherapy is a generic term for the application of electrophysical modalities by PTs as treatment measures for indicated conditions. They involve the introduction of physical energy into a biologic system. This energy brings about physiological changes with therapeutic benefit. Electrophysical modalities include a wide range of selections including electromagnetic and sound waves, muscle, nerve and body fluid stimulating currents. As there are always new modalities being manufactured and promoted in the market, PTs always identify those new products with patient safety as well as evidence-based therapeutic effects.

Non-exhaustive but commonly used electrotherapy modalities can be catalogized in electrical stimulation, thermal and non-thermal agents:

| Electrical Stimulation agents / Modalities          | Thermal Agents / Modalities                          | Non-thermal Agents / Modalities                           |
|---|--|---|
| Transcutaneous Electrical Nerve Stimulation (TENS)  | Infra Red Irradiation (IRR)                          | [Pulsed] Ultrasound                                       |
| Interferential Therapy (IFT)                        | Shortwave Diathermy (SWD)                            | Low Intensity Pulsed Ultrasound (LIPUS)                   |
| Neuromuscular Electrical Stimulation (NMES)         | Microwave Diathermy (MWD)                            | [Pulsed] Shortwave Therapy (PSWT)                         |
| Functional Electrical Stimulation (FES)             | Other RF Therapies                                   | [Pulsed] Laser Therapy (LLLT/LILIT)                       |
| Faradic Stimulation                                 | Hydrocollator Packs                                  | [Pulsed] Microwave Therapy                                |
| Iontophoresis                                       | Wax Therapy  | Low Intensity RF Applications                             |
| High Voltage Pulsed Galvanic Stimulation (HVPGS)    | Balneotherapy (inc spa / whirlpool)                  | Magnetic Therapies (Pulsed / Static)                      |
| Low Intensity Direct Current (LIDC) and Pulsed LIDC | Hydrotherapy   | Electromagnetic therapy e.g. Super Inductive System (SIS) |
| Diadynamic Therapy                                  | Fluidotherapy  | Pulsed Electromagnetic Fields (PEMF's)                    |
| H Wave Therapy; Action Potential system (APS)       | Therapeutic Ultrasound                               | Acoustic wave e.g. Shock wave                             |
| Russian Stimulation; Medium Frequency Stimulation   | Cryotherapy / cold therapy / Ice / Immersion Therapy |   |
| Rebox Therapy; Scenar Therapy                       | Laser Therapy  |   |
| Microcurrent therapy (MCT)                          |  |   |



## **EPT Treatment Administration**

### **Application Criteria by Physiotherapists**

- Should be anatomical, physiological and pathological knowledge based
- Have mastered a comprehensive knowledge on the indication and contra-indication of the type of EPT applied
- Able to monitor the mode and dosage of the EPT applied for treatment progression and effective outcome measure
- Update the EPT model and the treatment effect on a regular basis
- Able to provide professional decision on the start and discontinuation of the EPT application

### **Selection Criteria for Equipment**

- The equipment meets all applicable legal requirements for health, safety and accessibility.
- The functional efficiency of the EPT is ensured by regular test and maintenance.