



## Press release

*For immediate release*  
31<sup>st</sup> August 2017



**Movement for Health**  
World Physical Therapy Day

### Physical activity for life

All healthy adults need to be physically active, and globally, 26% of adults aged 18 and over are not active enough. This is the message from thousands of physical therapists across the world as they prepare to take part in World Physical Therapy Day on 8th September 2017.

Every year, World Physical Therapy Day allows individual physical therapists and WCPT member organisations to celebrate their contribution to global health. This year's event builds on the success of 2016, when thousands of physical therapists used the #worldptday hashtag on Twitter to unite events across the world.

Once again, World Physical Therapy Day is aligned with a World Health Organization (WHO) action plan. The World Health Organization has two classifications for physical activity: moderate, such as brisk walking or cycling, and vigorous, such as running or fast swimming.

However, global levels of inactivity have not been falling as quickly as they should. Physical activity, as part of day-to-day life, can improve cardiorespiratory fitness, muscular health and reduce the risk of conditions including cardiovascular disease and type 2 diabetes.

"The evidence is unambiguous," says WCPT President Emma Stokes. "Being physically active is absolutely essential for health and wellbeing. It is also clear that this is a challenge for many people.

"Our lifestyles and the environments where we work, play and learn are not always conducive to being physically active. But there are lots of simple ways to incorporate physical activity into our busy lives. That's what World Physical Therapy Day is all about."

Exercise and physical activity are different things, so 'physical activity' can include household tasks and gardening, as well as dancing, running or cycling. With an advanced understanding of how to keep the body moving, physical therapists can help people across the world to integrate physical activity into daily life.

"In 2013, a global voluntary target was set by the World Health Assembly to reduce physical inactivity by 10% by 2025," says Emma Stokes. "But progress towards achieving this target has been slow."

“Across the world, more than a million physical therapists have an opportunity to educate, enable and empower people of all ages to increase their physical activity. Helping even ten people become more active will have a significant impact on global inactivity levels. So let’s start as we mean to continue with World Physical Therapy Day.”

*For more information, contact your national physical therapy organisation (see [www.wcpt.org/members](http://www.wcpt.org/members)), see the resources at [www.wcpt.org/wptday-toolkit](http://www.wcpt.org/wptday-toolkit) or email Mia Lockner at [mlockner@wcpt.org](mailto:mlockner@wcpt.org)*

## **Background information**

### **About physical therapy**

Physical therapists (known in many countries as physiotherapists) are experts in developing and maintaining people’s ability to move and function throughout their lives. With an advanced understanding of how the body moves and what keeps it from moving well, they promote wellness, mobility and independence. They treat and prevent many problems caused by pain, illness, disability and disease, sport and work related injuries, ageing and inactivity.

Physical therapists are educated over several years, giving them a full knowledge of the body’s systems and the skills to treat a wide range of problems. This education is usually university-based, at a level that allows physical therapists to practise independently. Continuing education ensures that they keep up to date with the latest advances in research and practice. Many physical therapists are engaged in research themselves.

More detailed information about what physical therapists do can be found on WCPT’s website: [www.wcpt.org/policy/ps-descriptionPT](http://www.wcpt.org/policy/ps-descriptionPT).

### **Campaign resources**

WCPT has pulled together a collection of additional resources on physical activity: <http://www.wcpt.org/wptday-resources>.

### **About World Physical Therapy Day**

World Physical Therapy Day falls on 8th September every year, and is an opportunity for physical therapists from all over the world to raise awareness about their crucial role in keeping people well, mobile and independent. The day was established by WCPT in 1996, and marks the date on which WCPT was founded in 1951. More details and toolkit at: [www.wcpt.org/wptday](http://www.wcpt.org/wptday).

### **About the World Confederation for Physical Therapy**

WCPT is the profession’s global body representing over 350,000 physical therapists/physiotherapists from member organisations in 111 countries. More information: [www.wcpt.org](http://www.wcpt.org).