



Press release

For immediate release
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Physical therapists help people be fit to take part

Physical therapists can help people fulfil their potential and participate fully in society – whatever their disability or state of health. This is the message from the profession's global body the World Confederation for Physical Therapy (WCPT) as physical therapists (known in many countries as physiotherapists) mark World Physical Therapy Day on 8th September.

Research shows that people with a disability are less likely to be employed or playing an active part in society. This waste of potential has more than a personal cost. Lack of participation by people with disabilities costs some economies 7% of their gross domestic product.

However, it needn't be like that, says WCPT. "Physical therapists have a key role in supporting people with illness and disability to participate fully in society," says Marilyn Moffat, the WCPT President. "They specialise in human movement, identifying factors that prevent people from being as active and independent as they can be, and then find ways of overcoming them through rehabilitation, science-based exercise prescription, and promotion of physical activity."

The World Health Organization and the World Bank have said in a joint report: "Rehabilitation is a good investment because it builds human capacity. It should be incorporated into general legislation on health, employment, education, and social services and into specific legislation for people with disabilities."

On World Physical Therapy Day WCPT says the message needs to go out to politicians and policy makers that investing in physical therapy services not only transforms people's lives – it makes good economic sense.

For more information, contact the national physical therapy organisation in your country (see www.wcpt.org/members), see the resources at www.wcpt.org/wptday-toolkit or email Simon Crompton at news@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.

About the impact of physical therapy

A WCPT online booklet provides facts, research findings, statistics and articles demonstrating the contribution of physical therapists: <http://www.wcpt.org/wptday-resource-booklet>.

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.

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 106 countries. For more information go to www.wcpt.org.