

Mobility Physiotherapy

Ireland has an ageing population. It is predicted that in 20 years time, there will be over a million Irish people aged over 65. The changes that occur with aging can lead to problems with a person's ability to move around, or mobility. Mobility problems include unsteadiness while walking, difficulty getting in and out of a chair, or falls. Muscle weakness, joint problems, pain and neurological problems - common conditions in older people-can all contribute to mobility problems. Sometimes several mild problems occur at the one time and combine to seriously affect mobility.

Another problems faced by older people is falling and fall related injuries. It is estimated that one in every three people over the age of 65 years and one in two people over the age of 80 years fall every year. Older people are more likely to suffer serious injuries, disability, psychological consequences and death following a fall than other age groups.

Research has shown that physiotherapy can help to improve mobility and prevent falls, allowing people to live safely and enjoy to optimal quality of life as they age. Physiotherapy involves:

- 1) **Assessment:** The physiotherapist will help you identify your main problems, and together you will set goals to address them. A thorough assessment of your mobility includes gait, balance, flexibility, strength, endurance, medical history, home life situation, hobbies and interests
- 2) **Treatment Plan:** Physiotherapists stay abreast of current research to ensure the best possible treatment plan is designed and tailored for your needs.

Treatments include:

- Balance exercises that are highly challenging
- Strengthening exercises that are functional and targeted
- Gait re-education
- Provision of mobility aids if appropriate
- Footwear advice
- Education
- Splints and/or other aids if required

General Exercise Advice:

Exercising through life is very important for our physical, emotional and mental health. As people get older they tend to become less active and exercise less. No one can stop getting older but it is possible to see improvements with regular exercise at any age. We are better able to manage any health issues that arise in older age if we are doing appropriate exercise and are living actively.

The benefits of exercise include:

- Decreased risk of coronary heart disease
- Decreased blood pressure
- Decreased cholesterol levels
- Decreased obesity and obesity-related diseases e.g. diabetes
- Can help manage osteoporosis
- May prevent or delay cognitive decline
- May reduce or prevent depression

Physiotherapy can advise you how best to exercise in a safe and worthwhile way.

