

## Treatment using Work Related Activity

### What does it involve?

It is a formal treatment programme (secondary intervention) for workers with sub acute soft tissue injuries where recovery has not progressed as expected. Its aim is to assist injured workers with achieving a level of function required for them to perform the tasks that their job involves. It incorporates a cognitive behavioural approach, targeted education and graded activity with a view to progressing the worker to self management.

### What do Prowork Consultants treatment programmes entail?

At Prowork Consultants, we understand that every worker is unique. We believe that in order to achieve the **most effective outcome**, we must identify and address the many and complex issues impacting on the individual's return to work.

Our treatment programmes are now delivered using a *multidisciplinary approach*. We utilise the expertise of Physiotherapists, Exercise Physiologists, Rehabilitation Counsellors/ Psychologists and Occupational Therapists to tailor our programmes specific to the needs of the injured worker.

The initial assessment is the first step and may include:

- ❖ A workplace review by an Occupational Therapist (*where a workplace rehabilitation provider is not engaged and/ or where information relating to the injured workers' job demands is not available*). Purpose is to:
  - ⇒ Identify the critical physical work demands to enable exercise prescription relevant to the injured workers' job requirements.
  - ⇒ Provide workplace information to the assessing physiotherapist to assist with the development of baseline functional outcome measures.
  - ⇒ Determine whether on-site functional education would be indicated in consultation with the assessing physiotherapist and/ or Psychologist/ Rehabilitation Counsellor.
- ❖ An initial physical/ functional assessment by a Physiotherapist. Purpose is to:
  - ⇒ Screen workers suitability to participate in the programme (i.e. for 'red flags' / presence of psychosocial barriers - 'yellow flags')
  - ⇒ Provide baseline for functional outcome measures as related to the critical physical work demands
  - ⇒ Identify RTW barriers (i.e. physical/ work related) and discuss strategies to overcome the barrier/s in the case conference.
- ❖ An integrated assessment by a Psychologist/ Rehabilitation Counsellor. Purpose is to:
  - ⇒ Assess psychosocial barriers impacting on RTW and an individual's coping/ problem solving capabilities
  - ⇒ Consult with the assessing physiotherapist to develop a plan of action required to overcome identified RTW barriers.
- ❖ Case conferencing.
  - ⇒ Consultation with assessing Physiotherapist; Psychologist/ Rehabilitation Counsellor; Occupational Therapist; Exercise Physiologist and injured worker to develop and agree on a plan of action to overcome identified RTW barriers.
  - ⇒ Development of multidisciplinary Work Related Activity Management Plan

There are a number of different plan options that can be tailored to address the individual needs of workers. Our treatment programmes contain the following elements:

- ❖ Upgrading of injury specific exercises, tolerance to work specific tasks & home activity levels;
- ❖ Strong focus on return to work and simulation of work specific tasks
- ❖ Cognitive behavioural approach including education about the nature of persisting pain, goal setting, activity pacing, safe manual handling techniques/ postural awareness, positive reinforcement, etc.
- ❖ Liaison/ case conferencing with key stakeholders (i.e. NTD, employer &/ or rehabilitation provider)
- ❖ Teaching of self-management strategies to foster activity adherence/ maintenance including dealing with flare-ups, etc.
- ❖ Mid and/ or final reports upon request

## Who is appropriate for the treatment programme?

In general, the treatment programmes are suitable for workers who have sustained injuries to the musculoskeletal system (i.e. muscle, joint, ligament, cartilage, tendon and intervertebral disc injuries) and whose recovery is not proceeding as expected by 4-6 weeks post injury. Other examples of when referral may be appropriate are listed below:

- Worker is de-conditioned and lacks the physical capacity to safely return to work or perform the tasks associated within their specific role;
- Worker has been performing suitable duties for an extended period of time without making steady upgrades because of their pain;
- Worker has experienced previous recurrences of their injury;
- Worker has reported reduced confidence in physical abilities and fear of re-injury.

An initial assessment will determine if an injured worker is suitable for the treatment programme.

## When should I refer?

It may be appropriate to refer following the acute stage of treatment for an injury. Evidence suggests that early intervention is the most effective means of assisting an injured worker return to full functional capacity. Referral for an initial assessment can be made as early as 4-6 weeks post injury.

## Where does the treatment programme take place?

Initial assessments are conducted at our Head Office in Chullora and may also involve a workplace review.

*The physical upgrading component* of the treatment plan is conducted at a fitness facility local to the injured workers home or workplace within the Sydney Metropolitan region. Pending assessment findings/ recommendations, *the targeted educational component* may be performed on-site and/ or in our offices.

## Can I refer directly?

Yes. Anyone involved in an injured workers rehabilitation is able to refer directly to Prowork Consultants – e.g. treating doctors, employers, insurers, treating physiotherapists, etc. We will follow up approval from the Insurance Company and where required, obtain support from the treating doctor to proceed.

To refer a client, you can log onto our website [www.prowork.com.au](http://www.prowork.com.au). Select 'referral form' and complete details in each section. You can submit the form electronically or print out a copy and return it to:

**Prowork Consultants**  
**PO Box 3359**  
**BANKSTOWN NSW 2200**

Alternatively, you may fax the completed referral form to:

**Fax: (02) 9790 8652**

If you require assistance in completing the referral form, please do not hesitate to contact us on:

**Phone: (02) 9790 8651**