Network Rail
Musculoskeletal Physiotherapy Service
Questions & Answers for Employees
Introduction

Network Rail has contracted RehabWorks to provide specialist advice and treatment to help employees with their recovery from sprains, strains and other causes of pain commonly known as musculoskeletal disorders (MSD). This service provides early access to chartered physiotherapists who will be able to assess, rehabilitate and help you manage such conditions. This reflects best medical practice, early intervention is known to assist and support recovery from musculoskeletal conditions.

What is a musculoskeletal disorder (MSD)?

A MSD affects the bones and muscles of the body and the soft tissues (muscle, tendons and ligaments) that hold them together. They most often occur in the joints of the neck, back, lower limb (i.e. hip, knee and ankle) and upper limb area (i.e. shoulder, elbow, and wrist.)

Who are RehabWorks?

RehabWorks are a private company who specialise in the prevention and management of musculoskeletal conditions and ill health in the workplace. Other organisations that currently work with RehabWorks include large utility companies, manufacturing companies, police forces, Royal Mail, and BT.

How can I get referred to RehabWorks?

If you have a MSD which is affecting your work or home life then you can ask your line manager to refer you directly, or you may prefer to contact your Route OH Advisor (OHA).

What happens next?

Following referral the RehabWorks National Service Centre (NSC) will contact you to arrange an Telephonic Clinical Assessment (TCA) with a Physiotherapist.

Following the initial screening call the physiotherapist will follow evidence based guidelines for best practice and decide whether a face to face physiotherapy appointment is required, or if telephone advice including a home exercise programme would be better.

If face to face physiotherapy is indicated an appointment may be made at the time of the TCA, alternatively contact details are passed to the clinic and they will contact the employee directly.

Employees are called again, between 1 & 4 weeks after their initial TCA, to review and support your recovery and feedback on work progress.

For long standing chronic MSD’s RehabWorks provides an exercise and education based service called a Functional Restoration Programme (FRP). Referrals to FRP will be made on a case by case basis.

RehabWorks will keep your line manager updated on the progress of your case following each touch point with the RehabWorks Physiotherapist.

ease programme, or a course of face to face treatment. RehabWorks will make the necessary arrangements directly with you and inform your site OHA and Line Manager of the outcome of the referral.
How can you diagnose my problem over the telephone?

We don’t: the TCA is designed as part of the screening process, injured body parts have particular pattern of symptoms; this pattern can be identified by asking questions such as “where is the pain?” “what makes the pain worse or better” and “how did the pain start?”. This enables your physiotherapist to determine a clinical impression and appropriate treatment pathway. There are times where more information may be needed to identify the condition and this is when you will be referred to see someone face to face.

What should I expect at the assessment if I am seen face to face?

This will take place either at a RehabWorks centre or at a RehabWorks quality-assured network clinic. Your physiotherapist will build on the subjective assessment (verbal) from your TCA by performing an objective assessment (physical examination) to provide you with some guidance for rehabilitation. Your objective assessment may also include functional testing against your current job role so that we can assist your return to work or help you remain on full duties. You may be provided with a home exercise programme and work/lifestyle advice e.g. posture & ergonomic advice.

Will I always receive manual therapy?

RehabWorks physiotherapists follow evidence based guidelines and practice, to address your symptoms and their effects on function and well-being. Research has highlighted that not all symptoms require or benefit from manual therapy (hands on treatment). It is often more important that the home exercises and advice are followed by an individual daily, compared to the treatment performed during the short contact time with a therapist on a weekly or fortnightly basis.

Should I expect to be sore after physiotherapy treatment?

You might feel sore after manual therapy, stretches or exercise. It should not last more than 48 hours and not be at a level where it affects your overall daily or work function. If you are concerned about any post physiotherapy symptoms, please contact your physiotherapist and discuss it with them.

What information is passed to Network Rail?

Following all contact made with RehabWorks we will send, via email, a short report to your OHA, Line Manager, and occasionally HR, detailing the advice provided to you as well as any treatment that has been arranged to address the MSD. The report will only deal with work related issues and not personal medical information.

Who can use the service?

The service is available to all employees suffering a MSD. It does not have to be work-related and you do not need to see your GP first. You also don’t need to absent from work. The service is available at no cost to the employee.*

*If referred to a physiotherapy clinic the employee may be liable for failing to attend a booked session (or cancellation within 24 hours)