

# Rehabilitation and Long COVID



World PT Day 2021

## What is rehabilitation?

Rehabilitation is defined as a set of interventions to optimise functioning in everyday activities, support individuals to recover or adjust, achieve their full potential, and enable participation in education, work, recreation and meaningful life roles.



Safe and effective rehabilitation is a fundamental part of recovery.

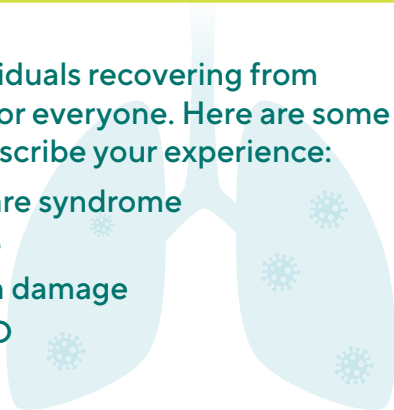
Rehabilitation for Long COVID must be tailored to the individual, depending on their symptoms, goals and preferences.



The World Health Organization recommends that Long COVID rehabilitation should include educating people about resuming everyday activities conservatively, at an appropriate pace that is safe and manageable for energy levels within the limits of current symptoms, and exertion should not be pushed to the point of fatigue or worsening of symptoms.

Rehabilitation for individuals recovering from COVID-19 is different for everyone. Here are some terms that may best describe your experience:

- post-intensive care syndrome
- post-viral fatigue
- permanent organ damage
- long-term COVID



Regardless of the symptoms you experience, your physiotherapist will treat you as an individual and get to know the underlying cause before starting treatment.

Effective rehabilitation interventions to support self-management of symptoms may include:

- activity pacing
- heart rate monitoring

In order to best meet your needs, a physiotherapist will work with other health professionals as part of your assessment and rehabilitation programme. Various tests may be carried out to understand and find the cause of symptoms such as:



breathlessness



feeling faint or fainting



chest pain



dizziness



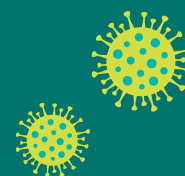
heart palpitations



low oxygen saturation



fatigue



Exercise prescription in Long COVID should be approached with care to minimise risk and to ensure exercise programmes are restorative and do not make the individual's symptoms worse. Rehabilitation should aim to prevent oxygen desaturation on exertion. A specialist respiratory physiotherapist may help where there are signs of hyperventilation and breathing pattern disorders. **Graded exercise therapy should not be used, particularly when post-exertional symptom exacerbation is present.**



World Physiotherapy

[www.world.physio/wptday](http://www.world.physio/wptday)