



# How to help your patients achieve their New Year Health Goals

## New Year, New Health Goals

The new year often brings a renewed focus on fitness and health. However, patients often experience physical barriers such as knee pain, back pain, or muscle soreness that prevent them from staying active. These physical challenges can lead to frustration and derail even the best intentions. Early intervention with physiotherapy will address pain and any physical barriers to help patients achieve their new health goal.



Musculoskeletal pain affects **1 in 5** adults in Australia, making it a significant health concern.

## Common Exercise-Related Pain Points

GPs play a key role in identifying and addressing pain that hinders fitness and health goals:

- **Knee Pain:** Often due to overuse, patellofemoral pain, or early osteoarthritis.
- **Lower Back Pain:** Frequently linked to posture, poor technique at the gym, core weakness, or previous injuries.
- **Shoulder Pain:** Commonly caused by rotator cuff issues or poor movement patterns. This becomes especially prevalent when patients begin to perform some gym activity.

Early physiotherapy intervention is a key to allowing patients to stay active and achieve their goals.

## Key Indicators of Pain Impacting Fitness

When patients report challenges sticking to their fitness routine, watch for:

- **Discomfort during or after activity that seems more than what would be expected.**
- **Difficulty with everyday tasks, such as bending, lifting, or reaching after exercise.**
- **Hesitancy or fear of exercising or moving due to pain.**
- **Gradual withdrawal from physical activity due to increasing symptoms.**

Prompt referral to physiotherapy is the key! Before symptoms become too chronic we can assess the condition and develop a personalised treatment programme to address the root cause of the pain. This will then allow your patients to regain confidence and stay active.



**80%** of Australians will experience back pain at some point in their lives, with knee pain also common in active populations.



## Supporting Fitness Goals: The Role of GPs and Physiotherapists

Pain doesn't have to derail a patient's health goals. A collaborative approach between GPs and physiotherapists ensures the best outcomes for patients looking to stay active while managing pain.



### The Role of GPs

- **Initial Assessment:** Identify pain sources and assess physical limitations.
- **Imaging Referrals:** If required, organise imaging. In many cases as you are aware this will not be necessary.
- **Early Referral:** Faster presentation to physiotherapy = less treatment and faster recovery.



### The Role of Physiotherapists

- **Rehabilitation Plans:** After a thorough assessment develop a tailored manual therapy programme combined with exercises to address specific pain points and strengthen weak areas.
- **Postural Education:** Teach and correct movement patterns to prevent future injuries.
- **Activity Modification:** Provide advice to patients on how to maintain their fitness routine while managing pain.
- **Regular Communication:** GPs to be provided timely updates on patient progress, ensuring continuity of care.



Physiotherapy improves adherence to exercise routines, reducing pain and boosting long-term health outcomes.

This collaborative approach ensures patients can remain engaged with their goals.

## Treatment Options to Keep Patients Moving

Physiotherapy is central to non-surgical management of exercise-related pain. Interventions include:

- **Manual Therapy:** Hands-on physiotherapy techniques are essential to address stiffness and improve mobility = decreased pain
- **Personalised Exercise Plans:** Custom programs to strengthen weak areas, improve flexibility, and reduce pain.
- **Education:** Teaching patients how to modify activities and avoid reinjury.

Early GP referral ensures patients receive the care they need before conditions deteriorate.

## Refer to Benchmark Physiotherapy

We specialise in addressing pain that limits fitness and health goals. Our evidence-based treatment plans focus on movement, mobility, and recovery. Working together, we can ensure your patients stay active, healthy, and on track to achieve their health goals.

Visit the Benchmark Physiotherapy General Practitioners Hub for more resources to empower your patient for better outcomes with physiotherapy.

Contact us to find out more about how we can help your patients reach their potential.

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## References

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