



## Return-to-work (RTW) outcomes

Physiotherapy (PT) plays an important rehabilitation role in a worker's recovery and RTW.

When an employee isn't working and they start PT, **29%** return within 3 weeks and **40%** within 4 weeks (WCB-Alberta statistics 2022).

As of April 1, 2022, WCB has approved a standard two-phased PT approach for soft-tissue injuries, allowing more accurate matching between client need and treatment. This is a change from the previous model where WCB approved six weeks of treatment to start and extensions as required.

## The model

Tailored care (e.g., in person, virtual or hybrid) and flexible visit frequency to suit individual needs.

**Phase 1 – Acute care:** The initial authorization period of 4 weeks with treatments up to 3 times per week.

- During this acute phase, clients may need more care and education about their treatment and the benefits of RTW.
- Supported by new reporting at the 2-week mark.

**Phase 2 – Extensions:** Starting at week 5, up to 2 treatments per week to support transition to a home program and self-management.

## Progressive levels of review

Physiotherapist → claim owner (CO) → PT consultant

- 1. Physiotherapist** – can self-extend from 4 weeks to 6 weeks.
- 2. CAPS/ADJ/CM\*** – reviews at 4 and 6 weeks (can refer for additional services or continue PT care for up to 9 weeks).
- 3. PT consultant** – can extend recommendations beyond 9 weeks (clinically evaluated).

Based on historical actual number of visits per week this new model is anticipated to result in the right amount of treatment with a reduced length of stay, more triage points and stable costs.

\*Claims authorization and processing/adjudicators/case managers.

## Reporting

New reporting and increased frequency gives everyone involved more timely information. Here are some key highlights you'll be able to see on the employer-worker report:

### Can the patient RTW in some capacity?

No

### Estimated date you expect the patient will be able to perform modified work

2022-03-17

### Estimated date you expect the patient will be able to perform pre-accident work

2022-04-07

### Accommodations/modifications to support sustainable RTW

Modified hours, modified duties, gradual RTW plan, other (e.g., frequent change of position required)

### Gradual RTW plan

Mar 17 – 23/22: Material handling up to a light level, up to 4 hours/day

Mar 24 – 30/22: Material handling up to a light level, up to 6 hours/day

Mar 31 – Apr 6/22: Material handling up to a medium level, up to 6 hours/day

April 7/22: Return to regular hours and duties with no restriction

## We heard you!

### New reporting features for PTs and COs (based on your feedback):

Reports now show the number of weeks PT treatment has been delivered, as well as home exercise and supplemental home therapy (e.g., hot/cold packs, exercise bands, etc.) recommendations. Ready access to this information ensures PTs and COs are on the same page, working closely together with all stakeholders throughout the claim process.

### Weeks since assessment

1

### Home sundry items received?

Yes

### Home exercise program received?

Yes

## Supporting the change

The Health Care Strategy team is supporting COs through this change, and we're meeting with our PT network on a continual basis to provide education, support and feedback on their performance.

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