

# Physiotherapy, Massage and massage equipment

Many of us affected by thalidomide are suffering with muscular pain which may be worsening as we get older. If you are thinking about how you might maintain and possibly improve your health and you don't know where to start then here is a list of treatments which can be used in addition to pain killers or instead of with links to their professional associations. Make sure you check with your Doctor that you are a suitable candidate for these type of therapies.

Often it helps to use a combination of therapies together. Some in the group who have been helped started with physiotherapy and massage therapy and then continued to have regular sessions of massage therapy with the occasional further session of physiotherapy when needed. Some have also worked with a personal trainer, undertaken pilates and/or yoga to help strengthen their bodies and to support what they can do.

*"I'm really lucky that I've found a local Physiotherapy Clinic which specialises in sporting injuries. I go there every fortnight for a half hour massage on my neck, shoulders and back. That keeps everything moving and reduces a lot of tightness caused by using my arms and neck to do everyday things. If a massage doesn't sort out the pain, I see one of the Physios. They are brilliant and use manipulation, heat, laser, acupuncture or other equipment to sort the pain out and get me moving and pain free again. But the real secret is to keep having the regular massage."*

**The relevant membership Associations for these therapies is also provided. Many therapists work with disabled people and the association should be able to assist you in finding a therapist who has experience with disability and its additional demands. It is worth checking with them to see if there is anyone in your local area.**

## Physiotherapy

is a type of therapy that can help ill, injured or disabled people recover movement and function to their full potential. Physiotherapy covers a broad and varied range of work, which involves working with people to promote their own health and well being. They may use a variety of techniques including ice, heat, ultrasound, laser and exercise as well as advice about posture and lifestyle. If you are in pain it is difficult to know which exercises you can safely do at home. Physiotherapists can teach you certain exercises that will not harm you and once they have taught you how to do them you can do them on your own and if you wish then take them further with a personal trainer. This will help you strengthen your joints and muscles.

Specialist physiotherapists work in many areas including neurology (including stroke) mens and womens health (including incontinence), recovery after major surgery, orthopaedics and trauma, sports and workplace health.

You can access physiotherapy through the NHS or private practitioners. It is also sometimes possible to access physiotherapy treatment through other routes, such as charities and the voluntary sector. In some areas, 'self-referral' systems are in place that allow you to access physiotherapy directly. If you acquire an injury it can be beneficial to use your health grant to access private therapy quickly.

**The Chartered Society of Physiotherapy (CSP)** <http://www.csp.org.uk/>

**Sports Massage** - is the management, manipulation and rehabilitation of soft tissues of the body including muscles, ligaments and tendons. The therapist can physically enable the thalidomide body to stretch in a way that is not possible to do on its own. Muscles work in pairs and when a muscle isn't working properly it can shorten and contract causing pain. Massage helps stretch the muscle back to its normal length. Exercising them becomes easier.

Some of the reported benefits of Sports Massage include: Improve circulation and lymphatic flow, sedate or stimulate nerve endings, increase or decrease muscle tone, increase or decrease muscle length, and remodel scar tissue when required. To benefit from a sports massage you do not need to be a sports performer. There are many practitioners that work with a great range of clients. The benefits above can also help relieve many day-to-day problems that everyone experiences.

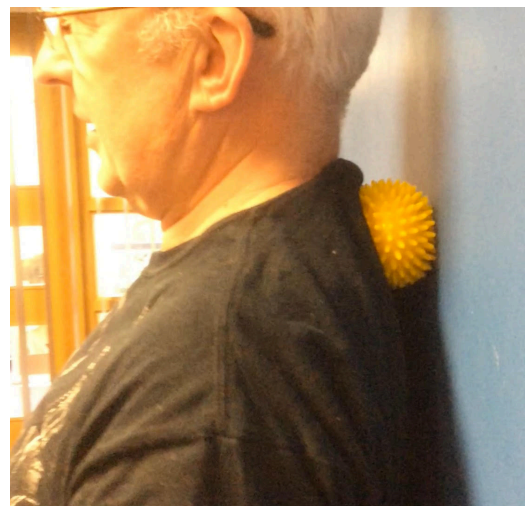
Look for a SMA LEVEL 4 or above accredited practitioner.

**Sports Massage Association**

<http://www.thesma.org/>

**Self massage equipment (as tried at the Fit for the Future event 2016)**

These simple massage tools will help you if you wake with tight muscles or when you cannot get to a massage therapist. Using massage tools can allow you to relax the muscles and improve circulation.



Use these products when wearing one layer of clothing to protect the skin. Use for no more than 5 minutes at a time.

## Spikey Balls

Available in different sizes for different muscles



[http://www.physioroom.com/product/PhysioRoom.com\\_Spiky\\_Massage\\_Ball/2267/39008.html?gclid=COS639DlnMwCFVEo0wodStUNWg](http://www.physioroom.com/product/PhysioRoom.com_Spiky_Massage_Ball/2267/39008.html?gclid=COS639DlnMwCFVEo0wodStUNWg)



**Foam Rollers** - for self massage, use two foam rollers to support the back.

The basic white foam rollers are all you need  
£9.95



<https://www.physique.co.uk/Rehabilitation-Exercise/Foam-Roller>



Blackroll double ball roller, great for relaxing muscles in the arm to help with wrist pain

£15.00



<https://www.physique.co.uk/Rehabilitation-Exercise/Foam-Roller/BLACKROLL-DuoBall>



## Massage chairs

Sit down and relax and let the electronic massage relax your back muscle.

We like the Homedics brand available on Amazon, look out for their special offers. You can use this for longer than the timed 15 minute programme. Use every day to keep aches and pain at bay.

[Amazon.co.uk](https://www.amazon.co.uk)

A database of therapists and professionals such as Physios, massage therapists, pilates teachers, etc, who have had direct experience of working with thalidomiders has been created and is being continually added to as we become aware of them.

These are individuals who have been recommended by those who have knowledge and experience of using them. However, different treatments and practitioners work for different individuals. The key is to find somewhere locally that you can use to reduce your pain – or more importantly, to stop pain becoming an issue in the first place.

The information and advice presented in these pages was developed by beneficiaries and advisers as a result of their participation in the Fit for the Future event held in April 2016. It is based on the advice and experience of those living with Thalidomide damage and those who work alongside them.

It is always advisable to talk to your own GP before embarking on an exercise or diet regime. The Health & Wellbeing team at the Trust are also available to support you with all aspects of living well and can provide further information and advice based on your specific needs. Please don't hesitate to contact them on 01480 474074.