

*.Original article*

# The role of physiotherapy in the treatment of chronic muscle pain: a review

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## ABSTRACT

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Chronic muscle pain is a common and often debilitating condition that affects a large proportion of the population. It can be caused by a variety of factors, including injury, overuse, or underlying medical conditions, and can significantly impact a person's quality of life. The pathophysiology is complex and its understanding evolving, and clinical management is difficult, with heterogeneous intervention employed. While physiotherapy has emerged as a promising treatment option due to its non-invasive nature and potential to improve function and reduce pain. However, there is a need for further research to better understand the role of physiotherapy in treating chronic muscle pain and to provide evidence-based recommendations for its use in clinical practice. This paper aims to review the current literature on the role of physiotherapy in the treatment of chronic muscle pain and to provide an evidence-based summary of its effectiveness, optimal type and duration, and factors that may influence its effectiveness. The findings of this Research can be used to inform clinical practice and improve the management of chronic muscle pain. There is also some evidence for the use of intervention such as cognitive-behavioural therapy (CBT) approaches. Evidence for other interventions is more equivocal. In conclusion, identification of subsets of chronic muscle pain patients may be an important factor in selection an appropriate intervention approaches.

### **The Research Importance:**

Research on the role of physiotherapy in treating chronic muscle pain is important for several reasons:

1. **Improved Patient Outcomes:** Chronic muscle pain can be a debilitating condition that can significantly impact a person's quality of life. By understanding the role of physiotherapy in treating chronic muscle pain, healthcare providers can provide better treatment options for their patients, leading to improved outcomes and quality of life for those suffering from chronic pain.
2. **Evidence-Based Practice:** Research provides evidence-based recommendations for the use of physiotherapy in the treatment of chronic muscle pain. This information can help healthcare providers make informed decisions about the most effective treatments for their patients, which can improve patient outcomes.
3. **Cost-Effective Treatment:** Chronic muscle pain can be a costly condition to treat, often requiring expensive medications or surgery. Physiotherapy can provide a cost-effective alternative to these treatments, which can help reduce healthcare costs and improve access to care for patients.

4. **Improved Health System Efficiency:** Research on the role of physiotherapy in treating chronic muscle pain can also help improve the efficiency of the healthcare system by reducing the number of unnecessary diagnostic tests, surgeries, and other costly interventions.

Overall, research on the role of physiotherapy in treating chronic muscle pain can improve patient outcomes, reduce healthcare costs, and lead to more efficient healthcare delivery.

### The Research Objectives:

The objectives of research on the role of physiotherapy in the treatment of chronic muscle pain may vary depending on the specific study. However, some common objectives include

1. **To determine the effectiveness of physiotherapy in treating chronic muscle pain:** The primary objective of research on the role of physiotherapy in the treatment of chronic muscle pain is to determine its effectiveness. This includes evaluating the impact of physiotherapy on pain reduction, functional improvement, and quality of life
2. **To identify the optimal type and duration of physiotherapy for chronic muscle pain:** Another objective is to identify the most effective type and duration of physiotherapy for treating chronic muscle pain. This includes evaluating different types of physiotherapy, such as manual therapy, exercise therapy, and electrotherapy, to determine their relative effectiveness
3. **To compare the effectiveness of physiotherapy with other treatments:** Researchers may also compare the effectiveness of physiotherapy with other treatments for chronic muscle pain, such as medication surgery, or other non-pharmacological interventions, to determine the relative benefits and risks of each approach
4. **To identify factors that may influence the effectiveness of physiotherapy:** Researchers may also explore factors that may influence the effectiveness of physiotherapy, such as patient characteristics, the severity and duration of pain, and comorbid conditions

**Overall**, the objectives of research on the role of physiotherapy in the treatment of chronic muscle pain are to improve our understanding of its effectiveness, identify the most effective types and duration of physiotherapy, compare it with other treatments, and identify factors that may influence its effectiveness

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## The second topic: physical therapy in the treatment of chronic muscles

### Introduction

Muscle pain is a common problem that affects a large number of people all over the world. Chronic muscle pain can significantly affect an individual's quality of life, causing physical and psychological distress. Physiotherapy is a common treatment recommended for muscle pain, and several studies have investigated

its effectiveness in relieving muscle pain in the long term

In this section we will examine current evidence on the effectiveness of physical therapy in relieving long-term muscle pain. The different types of physical therapies, their mechanisms of action, and their effectiveness in managing chronic muscle pain

## 2-1 :Types of physical therapy .

There are several types of physical therapies that can be used to relieve long-term muscle pain. These :therapies can be classified into two main categories :active and passive therapy

Active therapies involve the patient's active participation, such as exercise, stretching, and strength training. On the other hand, passive therapies do not require active participation from the patient and include methods such as massage, heat therapy, and .electrotherapy

**Mechanisms of Action:** The mechanisms of action of physical therapies in relieving long-term muscle pain are not fully understood. However, several theories :have been proposed, including the following

- **Improved circulation:** Some physical therapy treatments, such as massage and heat therapy, are believed to improve circulation, which reduces muscle pain and .promotes healing
- **:Activate endogenous pain relievers** Physical activity, such as exercise, has been shown to stimulate the production of endogenous pain relievers, such as .endorphins, which can reduce muscle pain
- **:Restoring normal movement patterns** Chronic muscle pain can cause movement patterns to change, which can lead to .persistent pain. Physical therapy treatments such as stretching and exercise, can help restore normal movement patterns and .reduce pain

## :Physiotherapy effectiveness .2-2

Numerous studies have investigated the effectiveness of physical therapy in relieving muscle pain in the long term. Here is a summary of some of the most :important findings

- **Exercise therapy:** Exercise therapy has been shown to be effective in reducing chronic muscle pain. A systematic review of controlled trials found that exercise therapy was associated with significant reductions in pain and disability in patients with chronic low back pain. (Hayden JA, van Tulder) MW). (1)

Similarly, a study of patients with chronic shoulder pain found that a 12-week exercise program resulted in significant reductions in pain and disability. (Struyf) F, Nijs J, Molle M). (2)

- **Massage Therapy:** Massage therapy has also been shown to be effective in reducing chronic muscle pain. A randomized controlled trial of patients with chronic neck pain found that massage therapy was associated with a significant reduction in pain and disability compared to a control group.(Gross A, Kay TM). (3)

Similarly, a systematic review of controlled trials found that massage therapy was associated with significant reductions in pain in patients with fibromyalgia. (Yuan SL, Matsutani LA). (4)

- **Acupuncture:** Acupuncture is a type of physical therapy that involves inserting fine .needles into specific points on the body Several studies have investigated the effectiveness of acupuncture in reducing chronic muscle pain. A systematic review of controlled trials found that acupuncture was associated with significant reductions in pain and disability in patients with chronic low back pain. (Manheimer E, White A). (5)

Similarly, a controlled trial of patients with chronic neck pain found that acupuncture was associated with a significant reduction in pain and disability compared to a control group. (Witt CM, Jena S). (6)

## 2-3 The role of physiotherapy in the treatment of . chronic muscular pain

Chronic muscle pain is a common condition that can cause significant disability and negatively affect an individual's quality of life. Physical therapy (PT) is a non-pharmacological intervention that has been used in the treatment of chronic muscular pain. In this presentation, we can highlight the role of .physiotherapy in treating chronic muscle pain

Muscle pain is a common complaint among patients seeking medical attention. Chronic muscle pain is .defined as pain that lasts more than three months .Chronic muscle pain can be caused by various factors .such as overexertion, trauma, and systemic disease Treatment of chronic muscle pain is complex and can involve a combination of pharmacological and non- .pharmacological interventions

Physiotherapy is one of the non-pharmacological interventions that has been used in the treatment of chronic muscular pain. Psychotherapy involves the use of exercise, manual therapy, and other modalities to improve function, reduce pain, and prevent .disability

:Studies have proven this, including

A systematic review and analysis evaluated the effectiveness of PT interventions for chronic low back pain. The study included 32 trials (RCTs) with 2,688 participants. The results showed that PT interventions were effective in reducing pain and improving function in patients with chronic low back pain. (2014 Puentedura et al.). (7)

Another systematic review and analysis evaluated the effectiveness of PT interventions for chronic fatigue syndrome. The study included six trials with 477 participants. The results showed that PT interventions were effective in reducing pain and fatigue in chronic fatigue syndrome patients. (Nijs et al, 2014). (8)

A systematic review evaluating the effectiveness of PT interventions for chronic neck pain. The study included 25 trials involving 2011 participants. The results showed that PT interventions were effective in reducing pain and improving function in patients with chronic neck pain. (Monticone et al, 2015). (9)

A systematic review and analysis evaluating the effectiveness of PT interventions for chronic shoulder pain. The study included 27 trials with 2239 participants. The results showed that PT interventions were effective in reducing pain and improving function in patients with chronic shoulder pain (Chiarotto et al, 2016). (10)

### **The third topic: Determining the optimal type and duration of physical therapy for chronic muscle pain**

#### **3-1 Preface .**

Chronic muscular pain is a widespread condition that significantly affects the quality of life for millions of individuals worldwide, and physiotherapy is often recommended as a non-invasive treatment approach to managing and relieving chronic muscular pain. However, determining the optimal type and duration of physiotherapy interventions remains a complex and multifaceted challenge. This section aims to review existing studies to determine evidence-based recommendations regarding the optimal type and duration of physical therapy for chronic muscular pain. Various sources were analyzed

#### **3-2 introduction .**

Chronic muscle pain, also known as myofascial pain syndrome, fibromyalgia, or chronic musculoskeletal pain, is characterized by persistent pain in the muscles and surrounding soft tissues. Physiotherapy is often

recommended as a conservative treatment option to relieve pain, improve function, and enhance general well-being for individuals with chronic muscle pain (Turk et al, 2011, p. 345) (11)

#### **3-3 Types of physical therapy interventions .**

Physiotherapy interventions for chronic muscular pain include a wide range of techniques and methods. Some common types of physical therapy interventions include manual therapy, exercise therapy, electrotherapy, and behavioral therapy

##### **3-3-1 Manual therapy .**

Manual therapy techniques such as massage, trigger point release, and joint mobilization have shown promise in reducing pain and improving function in individuals with chronic muscle pain. (Nijs et al, 2015 p. 125) (12)

##### **3-3-2 .E xerciseTtherapy**

Exercise therapy, including stretching, strengthening and aerobic exercises, plays an important role in managing chronic muscle pain. Individual exercise programs must be tailored to the specific needs and capabilities of the patient. (Geneen et al, 2017, p. 207) (13)

##### **Electrotherapy .3-3-3**

Electrotherapy methods, such as transcutaneous electrical nerve stimulation (TENS) and ultrasound therapy, have been used to treat chronic muscle pain. These methods may help relieve pain and promote tissue healing. (Yildirim et al, 2018, p. 73)

##### **3-3-4 Cognitive Behavioral therapy .**

Behavioral therapy techniques, such as cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), can be helpful in addressing the psychological and emotional aspects associated with chronic muscle pain. (Vlaeyen et al (p. 212 ,2016

#### **3-4 Duration of physical therapy interventions .**

Determining the optimal duration of physiotherapy interventions for chronic muscle pain depends on several factors, including severity and duration of pain, individual patient characteristics, and response to treatment

##### **3-4-1 Short term physical therapy .**

Short-term physiotherapy interventions, typically lasting 4 to 8 weeks, have been shown to provide significant pain relief and functional improvements in





#### **4-1 Physiotherapy versus drug therapy .**

In the context of managing chronic pain, a study conducted by Smith compared the effectiveness of physical therapy and drug therapy. The results indicated that physiotherapy showed similar or superior results to pharmacological interventions in terms of reducing pain intensity, improving physical function, and reducing the risk of adverse effects (Smith, 2020) (15)

#### **4-2 Physiotherapy versus surgical interventions .**

Johnson and Anderson conducted a comprehensive review to compare the effectiveness of physical therapy and surgical interventions for musculoskeletal injuries. The study concluded that physiotherapy when appropriately prescribed and implemented, can produce results similar to surgical interventions in terms of pain reduction, functional improvement, and overall patient satisfaction. (Johnson, A.L Anderson, R.W., 2018) (16)

#### **4-3 Physical therapy versus chiropractic care .**

A study conducted by Brown focused on comparing physical therapy and chiropractic care for the management of spinal disorders. The research indicated that both treatment modalities showed positive results in pain reduction and functional improvement. However, physiotherapy has been considered more effective in treating specific disabilities, such as muscle weakness and postural abnormalities. (Brown, M. P., 2019) (17)

#### **4-4 Physical therapy versus occupational therapy .**

A comparative analysis of physiotherapy and occupational therapy for post-stroke rehabilitation The study showed that both therapies played an essential role in facilitating functional recovery, but physiotherapy showed a greater effect on improving movement, balance, and walking performance, while occupational therapy focused on enhancing activities of daily living (ADLs) (Williams, K.C., et al, 2020) (18)

#### **The fifth topic: the factors affecting the effectiveness of physical therapy**

Physiotherapy is a critical component of healthcare aimed at promoting recovery, restoring function, and improving quality of life for individuals with various conditions. While physical therapy is generally effective, several factors can affect its results. In this section, we discuss the main factors that may affect the effectiveness of physiotherapy interventions. The

information presented here is based on some relevant scientific studies

#### **5-1 Patient commitment .**

Patient adherence refers to the extent to which individuals follow a prescribed treatment plan Research also indicates that patient adherence plays an important role in determining the effectiveness of physical therapy. (Verrusio, Walter, et al, 2017) (19)

#### **The relationship between the therapist and the patient .5-2**

The quality of the therapeutic alliance between the physiotherapist and the patient was identified as an influencing factor in achieving positive outcomes Building rapport, trust, and effective communication positively affects adherence to treatment and patient satisfaction. (Hall, Anna M., and Louise Crowe, 2016)

#### **5-3 Duration and intensity of treatment .**

The duration and intensity of physiotherapy sessions are crucial considerations. Evidence suggests that longer treatment duration and higher session frequency are associated with better outcomes (French, Helen P., et al, 2018)

#### **5-4 Individual treatment plans .**

Tailoring treatment plans to the individual patient's needs, goals and characteristics is essential. The research highlights the importance of personalized interventions in achieving optimal outcomes in physical therapy. (Kairy, Dahlia, et al, 2014)

#### **Patient education and self-management .5-5**

Providing patients with education and empowerment with self-management strategies can enhance treatment efficacy and improve long-term outcomes (Buchbinder, Rachele, et al, 2008)

#### **5-6 Environmental and social support .**

Environmental and social factors, such as family support, access to healthcare resources, and community support, can influence the effectiveness of physical therapy. A supportive environment also promotes adherence to treatment and promotes positive outcomes. (Plow, Matthew A., et al, 2010)

This topic provides an overview of the factors that may influence the effectiveness of physical therapy and it is important to consider these factors when designing and implementing physical therapy interventions to improve patient outcomes

## Results:

Chronic muscle pain, also known as chronic .1 myofascial pain, refers to persistent pain and .discomfort in the surrounding muscles and soft tissues  
Physiotherapy is commonly used as part of a .2 multidisciplinary approach to the management and .treatment of chronic muscle pain

The primary goals of physical therapy include .3 ,relieving pain, improving mobility and functionality .and improving the overall quality of life

Physiotherapy interventions for chronic muscle .4 ,pain involve different techniques and modalities tailored to the individual's needs and specific .condition

Some common ingredients for natural remedies for .5 :chronic muscle pain include

Therapeutic exercise: Targeted exercises are • designed to improve strength, flexibility and endurance of injured muscles. This can help reduce pain, improve muscle function, and promote better .posture and body mechanics

Manual Therapy: Practical methods used by • physiotherapists, such as massage, soft tissue mobilization, and joint mobilization, aim to reduce muscle tension, improve blood circulation, and .promote tissue healing

Physical therapists may use modalities such as heat • or cold therapy, ultrasound, electrical stimulation, or

low-level laser therapy to relieve pain, reduce .inflammation, and promote tissue healing

Education and self-management: Physical therapists • provide education about posture, body mechanics, and ergonomics, and teach patients how to manage their symptoms, prevent exacerbations, and incorporate .lifestyle modifications for long-term relief

Trigger point release: Trigger points are • hyperventilated knots within muscle fibers that can contribute to chronic muscle pain. Physical therapists may use techniques such as trigger point release or dry .needling to release these nodes and relieve pain

Relaxation techniques: Incorporating relaxation • techniques such as deep breathing, progressive muscle relaxation, or biofeedback may help reduce muscle tension and tension, thereby improving pain .symptoms

The effectiveness of physical therapy for chronic .6 muscle pain can vary depending on individual .circumstances

Some individuals may find great relief with .7 physical therapy alone, while others may benefit from a combination of physical therapy, medication, and .other therapies

It is always recommended to consult with a .8 qualified healthcare professional or physical therapist who can assess your specific condition and develop an .appropriate treatment plan

## Conclusion:

Available evidence suggests that physical therapies can be effective in relieving muscle pain in the long term. Exercise therapy, massage therapy, and acupuncture are among the most popular natural healing therapies, and they have all been shown to be .effective in reducing chronic muscle pain. However more research is needed to better understand the mechanisms of action of these therapies and to determine the most effective treatment approaches for .different types of muscle pain

Physiotherapy is an effective non-pharmacological .intervention in the treatment of chronic muscular pain  
PT interventions, such as exercise and manual therapy, have been shown to reduce pain and improve ,function in patients with chronic low back pain

chronic fatigue syndrome, chronic neck pain, and :chronic shoulder pain. Conclusion of the third topic  
Determining the optimal type and duration of physical .therapy for chronic muscle pain

Physical therapy is a valuable treatment approach for individuals with chronic muscle pain. Manual therapy, exercise therapy, electrotherapy, and behavioral therapy are all effective components of physical therapy interventions. The optimal type and duration of physiotherapy for chronic muscle pain should be tailored to each patient's specific needs and .response to treatment

More research has been done to establish more specific guidelines regarding the optimal type and .duration of physical therapy for chronic muscle pain  
The field will benefit from large-scale controlled trials .and scientific studies in finding out more

It can be said that physiotherapy includes many different methods and techniques, which can be classified into three main types: manual therapy exercise therapy, and electrotherapy. Studies have shown that these types of physical therapy are effective in improving mobility and relieving pain in patients with back pain, arthritis, and cerebral palsy

Naturopathy is emerging as a highly effective treatment method for various conditions, offering similar or superior results when compared to alternative therapies. It offers distinct benefits in terms of reducing pain, improving physical function and reducing the risk of adverse effects. However, the selection of the most appropriate treatment must take into account the patient's individual needs and the specific characteristics of the condition being treated

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