



PHYSIYOGA TELEHEALTH POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Updated 29th November 2021

The purpose of this document is to support the PhysiYoga staff to deliver high quality Telehealth services to clients



TELEHEALTH DEFINITION

The provision of Telehealth/virtual physiotherapy is considered as the provision of physiotherapy services remotely i.e. not in the same physical space that the client is.

The APA describes Telehealth as a consultation:

Where the client and physiotherapist are simultaneously present during the consultation and have synchronous audio-visual communication but are not co-located.. (also termed as) video-consultations. Telehealth consultations should be conducted in accordance with existing best practice clinical standards and models of care for face-to-face consultations. It is implicit in these guidelines that all normal standards of practice apply to telehealth as they would in face-to-face consultations.

This covers communication and support provided to clients when they are not physically in the clinic space. Therefore, the physiotherapy Code of Conduct extends to all consultations delivered online.

Examples of telehealth include (but are not limited to):

- Email
- Phone
- Video streaming

This document covers the policies and procedures for the provision of physiotherapy via remote means.

It is the physiotherapists' responsibility to ensure their professional indemnity insurance coverage covers telehealth and they are only treating clients who are located in the appropriate jurisdiction (i.e. Australia/South Australia).

The physiotherapist must work within their scope of practice, as laid out under the AHPRA guidelines for practice.



1. PATIENT SELECTION FOR TELEHEALTH

Clients advised of Telehealth must be determined as being:

1. Medically stable
2. Low risk of fainting
3. Low falls risk
4. Cognitively able to follow instructions and use the technology, or have support from someone to assist them on site (i.e. care-giver)

The APA advises the following:

Physiotherapists have extensive training in their degrees about risk management. They are taught how to evaluate risk in all clinical situations and use their clinical reasoning and clinical judgments on a daily basis to guide how they interact with patients to minimise risk. This is part of the DNA of a physiotherapist and is applicable regardless of the mode of interaction with the client (e.g. in-person or online).

There is no 'one size fits all' guide for which clinical conditions are appropriate for online consultations. Some conditions they may be thought to be high risk on the surface (such as balance issues or heart conditions) may be very appropriate to see via tele depending on the nature of supports available in the home (e.g. carer) and the type of interaction that is planned (e.g. education, supine muscle conditioning). Other conditions that may be considered low risk (such as knee OA) may be inappropriate in certain circumstances (e.g. lack of privacy, impulsiveness etc). Physiotherapists are adequately trained to evaluate risk and make decisions about which clients and conditions are indicated given the medium they are practicing in. This is the case for our medical specialists and GP colleagues.

<https://australian.physio/telehealth> (Accessed 6th April 2020)

2. SAFETY

Telehealth may not be appropriate for all clients. The physiotherapist must use their clinical reasoning to determine if provision of physiotherapy via telehealth is appropriate for the client. If the therapist deems telehealth to pose a risk to client safety, the physiotherapist has the right to refuse telehealth and instead direct the client to face to face sessions. Clients who may not be appropriate include (but are not limited to) for example balance issues or unstable medical conditions.

Should the client suffer an adverse event during the session, you have a duty of care to provide support to them. Therefore you must make sure you have confirmed the following information from their intake form at the start of every call:



- Client ID – confirm full name, DOB
- Local emergency services (ambulance)
- Current location of where they are (confirm at the start of the call)
- Phone number
- Verbal consent to record

In case of emergency, you must stay on the call with the client and use your mobile phone to call the client's local emergency services (as appropriate) and direct the emergency services to the client.

3. SPACE

The therapist must provide a professional and tidy appearance for the telehealth consult. This includes

- Adequately lit: Ensure gentle face light –not back lit
- Clear and uncluttered workspace
- Clean, clear, uncluttered background
- Appropriate audio and visual quality – see software and hardware setup under “technology”

4. DRESS

The PhysiYoga dress code applies to telehealth consultations. Dress as you would for face to face consults.

5. TECHNOLOGY

You require basic hardware in order to provide Telehealth/virtual physio. These are the items required:

1. Laptop
2. Webcam – may be built into the laptop. Camera situated at eye level.
3. Microphone – may be built into the laptop. Headphones may be required to improve voice clarity.
4. Audio – improve audio quality for yourself by using headphones with inbuilt mic, to reduce background noise

6. SOFTWARE

Clinicians must use only approved software programs, due to privacy and quality control measures. These are listed below.



Primary software programs to be used

- Nookal – clinical notes
- Physitrack – Telehealth calls & exercise prescription

Backup systems (if Physitrack call drops out or is unable to connect)

- Phone call (preferred)
- Please contact the Director in advance if you wish to use the PhysiYoga Zoom as appropriate security settings must be applied and further support for the client to use Zoom may be required. Do not use personal Zoom accounts.

7. SCHEDULING

- Standard consults: 30 minute consult
- Initial consult: 60 minute consult

During the first 3 sessions, Physiotherapists may allocate a 15 minute buffer after the consult to allow for potential technical difficulties in learning the new process.

The Physiotherapist will also provide:

- 2 week+ plan of advice and self management post consult including exercise and advice through PhysiApp
- Follow-up messaging for two weeks from the date of the consult

8. PRICING

Pricing is 75% of usual consult fee for in-clinic consults for the same consult time.

Current Private Health rebates for Telehealth are accessible from the APA:

<https://australian.physio/telehealth>

Recommendation at this stage is for patient to pay upfront and then seek reimbursement from their health fund. The following recommendations have been made by the APA in regards to the delivery of Telehealth with Private Health Insurers. This has been provided to PHA:

- the physiotherapist should use their clinical reasoning to determine if the patient is clinically appropriate to receive the service via telehealth
- physiotherapists must continue to work within their scope of practice
- the service is undertaken in accordance with the Australian Physiotherapy Association Telehealth Guidelines
- a GP referral is not required as per usual practice

The following table is included as a guide and is subject to change:

Private Health Insurance and Telehealth

PHI	Are they supporting telehealth?	Is a GP referral mandatory?	What conditions are covered for telehealth?	Date applicable from	Date applicable to	Weblink
Medibank	✓	No	As determined by physio	30/3/2020	30/9/2020	More information
BUPA	✓	No	As determined by physio	6/4/2020	30/6/2020	More information
NIB	✓	No	As determined by physio	14/4/2020	30/9/2020	More information
GMHBA	✓	Not known	As per PHA media release	Not known	Not known	More information
Aust Unity	✓	Not known	As determined by physio	Not known	Not known	More information
HBF	✓	No	As determined by physio	30/3/2020	30/6/2020	More information
St Lukes	✓	Not known	Unknown at this stage	Not known	Not known	More information
Teachers Health	✓	Not known	Unknown at this stage	30/3/2020	Not known	More information
AHM	✓	No	As determined by physio	30/3/2020	30/9/2020	More information
Police	✓	Not known	Unknown at this stage	Not known	Not known	No link found at this stage

The APA is expecting confirmation in the next few business days. Applicable new item numbers: 811 & 812

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Private Health Insurance and Telehealth

PHI	Are they supporting telehealth?	Is a GP referral mandatory?	What conditions are covered for telehealth?	Starting Date	Item numbers (811 & 812 or existing)	Weblink
Health Partners	✓	Not known	Unknown at this stage	Not known	Not known	More information
Defence Health	✓	Not known	Unknown at this stage	Not known	Not known	More information
CUA	✓	Not known	Unknown at this stage	Not known	Not known	More information
CBHS	✓	Not known	Unknown at this stage	Not known	Not known	More information
Mildura Health	✓	Not known	Unknown at this stage	Not known	Not known	More information
Phoenix	✓	Not known	Unknown at this stage	Not known	Not known	More information

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Return to Work SA currently covers Telehealth consults with the following schedule of fees (applicable from July 2021)

Item number	Description	Max Fee (excl GST)	Service type
PTTE9	Telehealth/Telephone initial consultation for workers who are unable to attend an appointment because they have been impacted by COVID-19. History, assessment, planning, education and treatment in accordance with the Clinical Framework for the Delivery of Health Services. Where possible, video consultations are preferred. Physiotherapists are expected to refer on if the required treatment cannot adequately be provided via telehealth and a face-to-face consultation is not possible.	85.60	flat fee
PTTE0	Telehealth/telephone subsequent consultation for worker's with an existing claim who are unable to attend an appointment because they have been impacted by COVID-19. Review, planning, education, and exercise prescription/monitoring. Maximum 10 sessions. A Physiotherapy management plan is required on commencement of this service.	79.30	flat fee
PTTE2	Telehealth/telephone long subsequent consultation for worker's with an existing claim who are unable to attend an appointment because they have been impacted by COVID-19. Review, planning, education, and exercise prescription/monitoring. This type of consultation is expected in only a limited number of cases where longer physiotherapy treatment is required, for example to engage an interpreter or for education purposes. Maximum 10 sessions. A Physiotherapy management plan is required on commencement of this service.	95.30	flat fee
PTTE4	Telehealth/telephone restricted consultation for worker's with an existing claim who are unable to attend an appointment because they have been impacted by COVID-19. Review, planning, education, and exercise prescription/monitoring. This type of consultation is expected in only a limited number of cases where longer physiotherapy treatment is required, for example to engage an interpreter or for education purposes. Prior approval from the claims manager is required. Maximum 10 sessions up to a maximum of 1 hour per session. A Physiotherapy management plan is required on commencement of this service.	190.30	per hour



9. PROCESS FOR THERAPIST

Prior to consult

- a. If initial consult; review intake form
- b. Prepare anatomy and other educational resources (i.e. models, online pictures) relevant to the client's main issue
- c. Set up space according to systems here

At time of consult

- d. Aim to start as close to consult time as possible
- e. Review essential emergency and ID questions (listed above)
- f. Gain consent prior to any recording taking place

Consult flow

- g. Complete subjective assessment as usual
 - i. Must ask PSFS
 - ii. Use other validated outcome measures by making note to send through PhysiApp at conclusion of consult
- h. Objective assessment, replacing tests with functional movements the client can perform
- i. Provide your assessment summary verbally, covering the following key points:
 - i. Diagnosis
 - ii. Address psychosocial barriers (beliefs, fears etc) as appropriate
 - iii. Provide advice on management
 - iv. Discuss possible plan options with client to select path moving forward
- j. Create Plan with client. Discuss and notify them you will send program details in Physiapp (exercises) and a summary email. Discuss with client how client will access it and to reach out to front office if any issues
- k. Plan for follow up: be clear about what you want to achieve in the next two to four weeks.
 - i. Book follow-up consult
OR
 - ii. 2 weeks of messaging
- l. Complete clinical notes in Nookal using Telehealth SOAP notes

Post consult

- i. Send Physiapp program within 24 hours.
- ii. Use PhysiYoga Treatment Pathway to detail plan – email to client after consult (within 48 hours)
- iii. Formulate Physitrack program – minimum of two weeks and send to client. Ensure 'adherence tracking' is switched on.
- iv. Follow-up message to client 48 hours after consult



- v. If the client has not opened the exercise program within 48 hours, follow-up with phone call to check they can access. If the client has accessed, send a message via the messaging function in Physiapp to check they understand

10. PROCESS FOR CLIENTS

INITIAL CONSULTS

Clients will complete their intake questionnaire as per usual. The Physiotherapist will review it to consider:

1. Is this client likely to be appropriate for Telehealth? (safe, medically stable)
2. Prepare for the body region that they will need to assess

During the initial introduction and subjective Assessment, the Physiotherapist must determine:

- If the client is appropriate for Telehealth
- How they will tailor the session based on the issue the client has
- **Confirm emergency information**
Local emergency services (ambulance) to the client
Current location of where they are (confirm at the start of the call)
Phone number
ID – confirm full name, DOB

11. CLIENT INFORMATION SHEET/EMAIL

Pre-consult Email is sent to all clients:

Dear [Client.FirstName]

I am looking forward to seeing you for your upcoming Telehealth consultation. It is scheduled for: [Appt.Day] [Appt.Date] [Appt.Month] [Appt.Time].

Please contact us if you haven't received your new client form to complete.

This Telehealth conference will be run through our secure software service Physitrack. We will send you an email with your unique Client Code and a secure link to the session.

If you experience difficulty joining the call, please call us on (08) 85368558. If the session drops out, we will call you back on the mobile number you have supplied us.



Please note: the session may be recorded for training and quality control purposes – please notify your therapist if you do not want this to occur.

Accessing your appointment:

- 1. Have your computer/device turned on and running. Make sure you are in a quiet space and you might like to have some headphones ready to improve audio quality. Make sure you have your computer camera or webcam ready.*
- 2. At the time of your appointment, your therapist will send you an email with your Telehealth access link. Click on this link and your consultation will start.*
- 3. Your physiotherapist will initiate the call with you at the booked time.*
- 4. If the internet connection drops out, we will call you on the phone number listed on your file. Please phone us if you have any questions or concerns throughout this process and we'll walk you through each step.*

Make the most of your appointment:

Please wear something loose and comfortable that is able to expose the area you are having trouble with if required. For example, if it's your knee, wear shorts. If it's your back or shoulder – wear a singlet.

Please bring any weights or exercise equipment you currently use or would like to use to the space ready to use.

Setup of your space

Technology: Using a laptop is best as you can be hands free. We can use your hand-held device to get a better/different view

Space: Make sure there is space behind you to move, demonstrate and practice exercises. Bring any exercise equipment into your space so it's ready to go

Lighting: Front lighting is best. Make sure the light source isn't behind you and it's not dark.

Audio: Using headphones can cancel out background noise and improve audio quality in both directions



Privacy: If possible, find a space that is private and quiet so you can concentrate, hear and be heard.

Payments

*You will be sent an invoice at the completion of your session which can be paid by Credit Card online or via EFT. Telehealth is now rebatable through most health funds. For up to date information, you can review the HICAPS website:
https://www.hicaps.com.au/coronavirus/Allied_Health_Item_Numbers*

We are excited you are embarking on your health journey with us through this exciting new medium! and the PhysiYoga Team.

Kind regards

[Provider.FirstName] (Physio) and the PhysiYoga team

HOW TO SETUP YOUR SPACE

The Physiotherapist must consider these factors when setting up their space. They may need to help advise the client on how to do the same.

Technology: Using a laptop is best as you can be hands free. We can use your hand-held device to get a better/different view

Space: Make sure there is space behind you to move, demonstrate and practice exercises. Bring any exercise equipment into your space so it's ready to go

Lighting: Front lighting is best. Make sure the light source isn't behind you and it's not dark.

Audio: Using headphones can cancel out background noise and improve audio quality in both directions

Privacy: If possible, find a space that is private and quiet so you can concentrate, hear and be heard.

12. PRIVACY

Client privacy and safety is our priority. We use encrypted software. The Physiotherapist must ensure client privacy throughout their consultation, by ensuring appropriate sound-proofing of their surroundings and visual privacy.



13. NEXT STEPS

Items to be developed and reviewed

- Quality control: Peer reviews of Telehealth Sessions to identify areas of improvement
- Client feedback
- Review of booking process
- Review of referral process
- Ongoing review of third party payments