

22 Physiotherapy at home

Cared for in comfort of own home

Why struggle to get yourself to hospital or a clinic when a therapist can come to you?

Rachel Wald looks at how in-home physiotherapy changed one couple's life.

The main staple in John's life was Beryl. They had been married for 68 years, living at home and managing well. John suffered from dementia, Beryl was always by his side and her constant presence kept him calm. Then Beryl fell and broke her hip.

In an all-too-familiar story, John was admitted to respite when Beryl was in hospital. His world had turned upside down. Without Beryl, he became increasingly agitated.

Beryl was desperate to return home but still needed a lot of rehabilitation. She couldn't attend her physiotherapy appointments. Not only was she physically incapable of driving, but she couldn't leave



Physiotherapy in the home, instead of as an outpatient, is seen as the way forward. Photo: AAP

John by himself. Luckily for them, they found a physiotherapist who made home visits. The result was life-changing.

Own Body Mobile Physiotherapy & Rehabilitation specialise in bringing physiotherapy to the home. They don't have a physical clinic; instead they adapt whatever treatment is needed to their clients' home.

"Beryl's hip improved quickly, but she had an extremely painful pre-existing knee

condition and that increased as it took on more. It had been dismissed as arthritis without a proper examination," Fiona White, director at Own Body says.

"Spending so much time with her gave me the chance to do a really thorough examination. It turned out to be a muscular injury which was easily treated."

Beryl's mobility, and quality of life, improved dramatically. "At 87, she was able to get back to her social outings with friends,

with John in tow. It was so heart-warming to see the love between them. To help them to continue to share their life together for as long as possible is beyond rewarding," Ms White says.

Ms White has many stories like this.

"I can't stress enough how happy this job makes me ... we build a stronger connection with our clients because they have welcomed us into their homes."

She feels it's often accepted that patients tend not to complete their physiotherapy exercises between appointments.

Ms White has been surprised by how diligent her Own Body clients are, compared to when she was working in hospital.

"I've had clients with detailed exercise programs from hospital physios, but can't remember how to do them. But setting an exercise regime that's specific to them and their home means they're more likely to remember to do them and how to do them."

Ms White feels that physiotherapy in the home, instead of as an outpatient, is the way forward. "We should be focussed on what's the best solution for each patient and with rising healthcare costs, we need to be financially responsible too."

"People recover better at home. They sleep better, they're in control of their pain medication and they're comfortable in their home environment. I can't tell you how many times the conversation starts with being told how happy a client is to be sleeping in their own bed again."

Own Body operate throughout Melbourne, Brisbane and the Gold Coast. They are planning to expand into Sydney later this year.



Mobile Physiotherapy & Rehabilitation

We are a mobile team of experienced physiotherapists who provide tailored, quality rehabilitation in the comfort and convenience of your own home. Our philosophy is centred on an individual approach and prioritising active management (rehabilitation) over passive therapies.

We listen carefully, and work with you to create a personalised tailored treatment plan to get you back to your life.

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