

Day-in-the-Life of a Canadian Physiotherapist -- Hospital Inpatients, Surgical Service



There are a variety of inpatient services within the hospital where physiotherapy services are provided. The schedules and activities of the physiotherapist vary from one practice area to another. The physiotherapy resources for clients within the surgical setting depend on the needs of the client population. An example of a possible day-in-the-life of a physiotherapist working in a surgical inpatients service is provided below:

Timeframe	Activity
8:00am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Arrive at work. ✓ Check email and voicemail messages.
8:15am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Ensure the client list from hospital's computer system is accurate. ✓ Identify new post-operative clients. ✓ Confirm that existing clients have not been transferred to other units. If the client has been transferred to another unit or service, contact physiotherapist on that floor/service and transfer care to that physiotherapist as appropriate.
8:30am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Go to the nursing unit to get client status reports from the charge Nurse, attend morning rounds or check clients' charts to assess client status and obtain information such as who has been discharged overnight or any changes in client status.
8:45am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Provide discharge teaching to those clients being discharged immediately. (E.g. review exercises, provide walking program, practice stairs training, arrange follow up at the cardiac rehabilitation program)
9:15am-10:30am	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Go to the intensive care unit to assess new post operative clients. ✓ Conduct physiotherapy assessment with three new cardiac surgery clients that have recently been extubated: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review chart for each client and ensure client is ready to begin post-op day #1 mobility routine. • Assist client into sitting and complete post-operative assessment (cardiorespiratory

	<p>assessment, quick neurological scan and musculoskeletal assessment).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist client into a chair and teach deep breathing and supportive coughing/huffing and basic leg exercises in sitting. • Document findings in health record/health chart.
<p>10:30am-12:00pm</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Go to the intermediary care unit to provide care to 4 existing post-cardiac surgery clients <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scan chart for any new information since the previous day. • Consult nurse to ensure that there are no concerns regarding the client receiving physiotherapy intervention. • Complete physiotherapy re-assessment. • Administer specific physiotherapy treatments as indicated. • Mobilize clients as tolerated; generally they will ambulate 20-50m. ✓ Talk with the physiotherapy assistant: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide the assistant with a list of clients who need to see the post-operative cardiac surgery education video. The video reviews information regarding activity after heart surgery. • Request any assistance from the physiotherapy assistant regarding help to mobilize clients requiring two-person assistance.
<p>12:00pm-1:00pm</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Lunch
<p>1:00pm – 2:30pm</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Return to the intermediary care unit to assess client who had a valve replacement and was fast-tracked to the Intermediate Care Unit. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the client's health record. • Assess their chest and mobilize as tolerated. ✓ Return to surgical unit and treat 4 other clients: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor Assess safety for discharge home. If not safe for discharge home, liaise with team regarding alternate appropriate discharge plan. • Assess the need for a gait aid. If the client requires a gait aid, provide the client and family with information on rental and/or purchase. Client education regarding fitting of gait aid, using the gait aid and safety concerns. • Assess need for other community and/or in-home services such as physiotherapy or occupational therapy in the home.

2:30-3:30pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Return to the intensive care unit to see 2 clients who have been ventilated for a significant period of time: one had a stroke post-op, the second has been difficult to wean due to chronic respiratory issues. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One client receives active assisted range of motion exercises and practices sitting balance at the edge of the bed. • The other client is assisted to the edge of the bed to increase endurance with anti-gravity upper extremity and lower extremity exercises. ✓ Document any changes to the client's status in the health record.
3:30-4:00pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Return to the staffroom to do daily statistics, check e-mails and voicemails.

Reflective Questions:

1. Were there tasks indicated in the sample day-in-the-life schedule that you were not familiar with performing? If so, which ones?

2. How does this day differ from your present practice? What changes would you make to your practice s or what new knowledge or skills do you need to complete these tasks with confidence?