

APA Musculoskeletal Spinal Courses – information and FAQ's

As part of a commitment to providing consistent, contemporary educational opportunities for physiotherapists, the APA are continually reviewing and, on a cyclical schedule, updating and/or re-developing course content.

As such, in 2018 the APA and MPA replaced the Spinal Physiotherapy Level 1 course with a new suite of foundational spinal courses that consist of highly contemporary and relevant information for a musculoskeletal physiotherapy audience. These courses form the Part A series of APA's spinal physiotherapy courses and represent the most important lumbar and cervical knowledge and skills for postgraduate musculoskeletal physiotherapists.

The current suite of spinal Part A courses consists of:

- 4 x Part A online pre-requisite modules
- Spinal Physiotherapy Part A (Lumbar) face-to-face course
- Spinal Physiotherapy Part A (Cervical) face-to-face course

The 4 x Part A online pre-requisite modules must be completed to be eligible to undertake either of the 2 x Part A face-to-face courses. The 4 x Part A online modules are only required to be completed once. Once completed, the 2 x Part A face-to-face courses (Lumbar and Spinal) can be completed in any order. This flexibility will enable a physio to skill up in one area at a time when it suits them best.

Part B spinal courses will be added to the suite of APA's foundational spinal courses and is the MPA's next development project. The Part B courses are set to cover foundational physiotherapy knowledge of the pelvis and thorax. This development will occur over the next couple of years.

What happened to the Spinal Physiotherapy Level 1 course?

The Spinal Physiotherapy Level 1 course has been retired. For the time being, it is recommended that physiotherapists complete the Part A online modules then enrol in either or both of the new Spinal Physiotherapy Part A courses that are currently available on the APA PD calendar.

Both Part A courses must be completed before undertaking Spinal Physiotherapy Level 2 course. Please read on for further details regarding this.

Where does the Spinal Physiotherapy Level 2 course fit within the suite of APA's Spinal courses?

Spinal Physiotherapy Level 2 course was developed to provide further musculoskeletal skills and knowledge for physiotherapists and remains relevant for those who have undertaken Part A.

We continue to update the material on the Spinal Physiotherapy Level 2 course by working with presenters to update/add information as required to ensure it remains a relevant professional development opportunity for our members.

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Can I undertake Spinal Physiotherapy Level 2 course if I have not undertaken the retired Spinal Physiotherapy Level 1 course?

Yes, if you have completed the Part A courses.

Please note that the Spinal Physiotherapy Level 2 course was developed as the follow-on course to the (now retired) Spinal Physiotherapy Level 1 course. Therefore, we recommend that you view the learning information and outcomes of the retired Spinal Physiotherapy Level 1 course to assess whether your equivalent knowledge and training meets these outcomes and equips you for the level of content that is taught in the Level 2 course. Spinal Physiotherapy Level 1 course information and learning outcomes can be found on the next page.

If you have **not** completed the Part A courses and you believe your knowledge and training meets the outcomes of the retired Spinal Physiotherapy Level 1 and Part A courses, you may apply for an exemption. To do this, a CV including an outline of the training you have undertaken highlighting how you have met these outcomes, must be submitted to the APA Event Delivery staff member managing the Spinal Level 2 course in which you wish to attend. This will be assessed by the local MPA Committee to determine your eligibility.

Path to Musculoskeletal Specialisation

The Musculoskeletal experiential pathway has been temporarily placed on hold whilst the framework is under review.

This should not prevent you from attending any of the musculoskeletal courses, whether it be the new Part A or the current Spinal Physiotherapy Level 2 course. In keeping with other disciplines, it is very likely that each of these courses (including the retired Spinal Physiotherapy Level 1 course) may contribute to a musculoskeletal physiotherapist's career pathway, once this re-opens.

Musculoskeletal titling may still be achieved via the [Musculoskeletal academic pathway](#). Once Musculoskeletal titling is achieved via the Musculoskeletal academic pathway, physiotherapists may continue on to apply for Fellowship of the Australian College of Physiotherapists by [Specialisation](#), or [Original Contribution](#).

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Information on the retired Spinal Physiotherapy Level 1 Course

The four day course aimed to provide the recent graduate physiotherapist, or those returning to musculoskeletal practice with a more detailed exploration of the clinical skills needed for assessment and treatment of the cervical, thoracic and lumbar spine. The course content included theoretical and practical components relating to assessment and management of neural, myofascial, articular and motor control systems within a clinical reasoning framework. The safe use of high velocity thrusts was taught with a high tutor to participant ratio.

Why did physiotherapists undertake it?

- Provided post-graduate learning experience and training to graduate physiotherapists in the musculoskeletal physiotherapy
- Extended participants biomedical knowledge, professional handling skills, clinical reasoning and appraisal in a biomedical/biosocial musculoskeletal paradigm.

Duration

4 days

Learning Outcomes

At the completion of this course, participants should...

1. have a greater understanding of the clinical reasoning processes, including pain mechanisms and models of health and disability, relevant to musculoskeletal physiotherapy.
2. be able to recall current theories and evidence for motor control and motor learning and their relevance in assessment and treatment of musculoskeletal conditions.
3. have furthered their skills in appraising posture and understanding of postural variance.
4. have enhanced their skills in the application and interpretation of a variety of manual lumbar and cervical spine assessment tasks.
5. have a greater understanding of the theory of normal soft tissue repair, factors influencing healing and developed their manual soft tissue assessment skills.
6. have more effective lumbar and cervical manual treatment skills
7. have developed their skills in assessment and treatment of lumbar and cervical spine motor control.
8. be better able to combine clinical reasoning with assessment and treatment strategies in the management spinal musculoskeletal conditions.
9. have a greater understanding of the clinical reasoning processes, including pain mechanisms and models of health and disability, relevant to musculoskeletal physiotherapy.
10. be able to recall current theories and evidence for motor control and motor learning and their relevance in assessment and treatment of musculoskeletal conditions