

Physical activity guideline for people with moderate to severe TBI

The *Australian physical activity clinical practice guideline for people with moderate to severe traumatic brain injury (TBI)* was developed by Australian researchers, clinicians and people with lived-experience of TBI to ensure that Australia's rehabilitation services and community programs are providing evidence-based best practice care for their patients.

It comprises five recommendations for the adult population and for children and adolescents aged five to 17. For each recommendation, a set of practice points has been developed to guide clinical decision making.



Aerobic exercise training (recommendations 1 & 2)

Training should be individually tailored across the continuum of care and include:

- assessment of fitness prior to exercise
- for adults—regular structured aerobic exercise
- for children and adolescents—regular energetic play and/or exercise.



Muscle strength training (recommendations 3 & 4)

Training should be individually tailored across the continuum of care and include:

- assessment of strength prior to exercise
- adults require—regular muscle strengthening exercise and ballistic training
- children and adolescents require—regular muscle strengthening play and/or exercise.



Task-specific mobility training (recommendations 5 & 6)

Training should be:

- considerate of setting/supervision requirements when cognitive/behavioural impairments are present to maximise participation and transfer to real life tasks
- incorporated into weekly routines with support from family, friends, support workers and teachers
- designed to incorporate motor learning principles of task-specific, repetitive, intensive practice.



Participation in sport and recreation (recommendations 7 & 8)

When facilitating participation:

- consider the sport and recreational physical activities the adult/child did before the injury—pre-injury activities can be a facilitator or cause distress
- consider the range of options using the inclusion spectrum to suit the needs, capabilities, preferences and goals of the person
- work with external service providers to facilitate access and opportunities
- facilitate participation through supporting funding requests and identifying adaptations and equipment for safe, appropriate activity
- be aware of the risk of a second brain injury.



Promoting physical activity (recommendations 9 & 10)

Physiotherapists and other health professionals should:

- follow public health physical activity guidelines for people with disability
- start conversation early and establish both short and long-term goals
- assess pre-injury physical activity levels and consider building on previous activities
- educate on the benefits of regular physical activity and promote self-management
- promote activities in fun/social settings, especially for children
- identify barriers and implement strategies to overcome them
- encourage a weekly routine with support from family, support workers and others.



Quick tips for exercise programs

Physiotherapists should:

- set goals collaboratively with client
- start slowly, monitor dosage and adjust as needed
- consider specificity of training and effect of fatigue
- aim to transition from health care setting to community setting when ready.

Proudly brought to you by:



Physiotherapy
Research
Foundation

For more information about the *Australian physical activity clinical practice guideline for people with moderate to severe TBI*, visit imh.org.au/bridges or scan the QR code.

