

Physiotherapy Vs Surgery ?

For many patients, deciding to have surgery following an injury can be incredibly difficult. The thought of surgery can be daunting, yet ensuring the best outcome for their injury is also important. Here we take the time to weigh up a few of the factors that might influence this decision.

Sometimes the decision can be simple. In the case of severe injuries, surgery is often universally acknowledged by all parties to be necessary for successful healing. Similarly, minor injuries can usually be treated successfully with physiotherapy quickly and without complication.

At other times, the decision can be more difficult, particularly when treatment with physiotherapy is not guaranteed to work. Surgery can seem like the fastest and most certain solution. Some people, including sports stars, elect for surgery as the quickest route back to competition even though the injury could be managed very well with physiotherapy over a longer time frame.

The level of function you require is also a factor. Those whose work has high physical demands may choose surgical intervention, whereas an office worker with the same injury may not. This is a very personal aspect to the decision and is largely influenced by your individual goals and values.

In some cases, taking six to twelve weeks to trial physiotherapy prior to surgery is the safest course and is frequently recommended by surgeons. This allows the body its best chance to heal without invasive interventions.

Also to take into consideration is the fact that many surgical procedures will still require weeks of rehabilitation with a physiotherapist after the operation to ensure complete success. Furthermore, the risks of surgery, though rare, can be serious including infection, scarring and even more serious complications due to undergoing anaesthesia.

Other factors that should be considered before deciding to undergo surgery include:

- Age
- Pre-existing health conditions or risk factors like heart problems, Diabetes Mellitus, obesity, etc.
- Allergy to medications
- Severity of pain
- Emotional condition
- Social/family resources necessary for the aftercare
- Religious belief

Before making any major decisions, it is important to consult medical professionals and ideally your physiotherapist to ensure you are well educated in all the risks and benefits of your decision.