

## Physiotherapy New Zealand (Occupational Health Physiotherapy Group) (PNZ) Core Competencies

Competency name	Definition
Absenteeism	The practice of regularly staying away from work. Also includes presenteeism, the practice of coming to work despite illness, injury, anxiety, etc., often resulting in reduced productivity.
Abuse or Harassment	<p>Abuse includes physical assault, sexual violence, emotional abuse and controlling behaviour. It is often a pattern of ongoing behaviour but may also refer to a one-off incident. Abuse can result in physical and mental health consequences for victims, perpetrators and children who are witnesses.</p> <p>Harassment is a pattern of behaviour that is directed against another person, including specified acts (for example as defined in the Harassment Act 1997) that causes the other person to fear for their safety (or that would cause a reasonable person in the circumstances to fear for their safety). In common use this can also extend to fear for the person's health.</p>
Ageing Issues	Age is not a barrier to work but ageing can mean the workplace has to manage a worker with a number of degenerative processes, from arthritis to dementia.
Ageing Workforce	<p>The average age of people in the New Zealand workforce is becoming older (and more female), and will stop expanding by about 2030. This will affect the labour market as ageing will affect the size, characteristics and possibly the productivity of the New Zealand workforce.</p> <p>Issues that may affect workers include vision, hearing, mobility, speed, agility, memory and strength, anxiety due to retirement. Also ageing workers can have more sleep issues if doing rotating shift work. This will have implications in the way organisations will have to operate in the future in an environment where they can support their workers, and optimise productivity.</p>
Amputation	The removal of a part or all of a body part that is enclosed by skin (usually a limb or digit) by trauma, medical illness, or surgery.
Back or Musculoskeletal Injuries / Discomfort	Injuries or pain in the body's joints, ligaments, muscles, nerves, tendons, and structures that support limbs, neck and back. This can arise from a sudden exertion (e.g., lifting a heavy object), or from making the same motions repeatedly (repetitive strain), or from repeated exposure to force, vibration, or awkward posture.
Burns	<p>A burn is a type of injury to skin, or other tissues, caused by heat, cold, electricity, chemicals, friction, or radiation. Most burns are due to heat from hot liquids, solids, or fire.</p> <p>The severity (or 'degree') of a burn relates to the number of layers of skin affected. The four degrees commonly referred to have different areas of injury, treatment options, and lasting effect.</p>
Compliance with Legislation	Working with organisations to ensure that they are aware of and take steps to comply with relevant health and safety laws and regulations.
Crushing Injuries	Crush injury is compression of extremities or other parts of the body that causes muscle swelling and/or neurological disturbances in the affected areas of the body, while crush syndrome is localized crush injury with systemic manifestations.
Cuts and Lacerations	A type of injury which happens relatively quickly in which skin is torn, cut, or punctured (an open wound), or where blunt force trauma causes a contusion (a closed wound). In pathology, it specifically refers to a sharp injury which damages the dermis of the skin.
Data Reporting and Analysis	Collecting data and/or analysing and interpreting actual health and safety performance compared with specific objectives, targets or standards.
Depression	<p>An illness that can affect how people feel and behave for weeks or months at a time. Depression is a state of a lasting low mood and often an aversion to activity that can affect a person's thoughts, behavior, feelings and sense of well-being, and impact sleep, relationships, job and appetite.</p> <p>Some specific areas of depression include post-natal depression, depression in the elderly, physical illness (some symptoms of physical illness are difficult to distinguish from those of depression), and depression in children and adolescents.</p>
Employee / Worker Assessment - Ongoing Fitness for Work	"Fitness for work" is a medical, health and/or functional assessment done when an employer wishes to reduce the risk of a worker injuring themselves or exacerbating an existing injury or illness when carrying out a specific job or task. The purpose is to determine if the worker can perform the job or task under the working conditions. - <u>Query adding psychological into the definition.</u>
Employee / Worker Assessment - Return to Work	An assessment of the worker and their job following time off work due to illness or injury. This is used to determine if the worker can safely carry out their job or assist the worker to make a safe and sustainable return to work.
Employee / Worker Assessment - Pre-employment Health Assessment	An industry-specific health and/or functional assessment, to review and document the workers' health status in relation to potential hazard/task that may impact the workers ability to carry out a job or be encountered during the course of the work, to provide a baseline for periodic health monitoring, prior to employment.
Fatality	<p>Prevention or management of a fatality at work. A fatality is the permanent death of a person (i.e. it does not include instances where a person is revived).</p> <p>Fatalities can result from senescence ('old age'), injury, or illness or chronic issues. In cases where attribution is unclear a Coronial decision stands as the official cause of death, including drawing conclusions about whether a fatality was work-related.</p>

Fatigue / Chronic Fatigue	<p>Fatigue can be a symptom of a medical problem, but more commonly it is a normal physiological reaction to exertion, lack of sleep, boredom, changes to sleep-wake schedules (including jet lag), or stress.</p> <p>Physical fatigue is the inability to continue functioning at the level of one's normal abilities; a person with physical fatigue cannot lift as heavy a box or walk as far as they could if not fatigued.</p> <p>Mental fatigue manifests in sleepiness or slowness. A person with mental fatigue may fall asleep, react very slowly, or be inattentive. With microsleeps, the person may be unaware they were asleep. Without proper amount of sleep, it will feel like certain tasks seem complicated, concentration will drop and it can ultimately result in fatal mistakes.</p>
Hand-Arm and Whole body Vibration Syndrome	The provision of specialist advice regarding hand-arm and whole-body vibration, and/or the measurement of this vibration for human health and/or comfort. Measurements for hand-arm vibration (HAV) and/or whole-body vibration (WBV) are used to assess exposure levels against appropriate action values and exposure limits, in order to evaluate risk.
Handheld Tools / Power Tools	<p>A hand tool is any tool that is powered by hand (e.g. wrenches, pliers, cutters, striking tools, struck or hammered tools, screwdrivers, vises, clamps, snips, saws, drills and knives)</p> <p>A power tool is a tool that is actuated by an additional power source and mechanism other than solely manual labour. Commonly power tools use electric motors, internal combustion engines, steam engines, direct burning of fuel and/or propellants, or natural power sources like wind or moving water.</p> <p>PCBUs need to manage risks related to noise, machinery safety and vibration that arise from the use of handheld or power tools.</p>
Hazard or Risk Assessment	Hazard identification, risk assessment and management: A systematic process to identify hazards and assess/quantify the likelihood, consequence/severity of harm and put in place appropriate controls.
Head Injury	<p>Head injury usually refers to a Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI), when an external force injures the brain, but is a broader category because it can involve damage to structures other than the brain, such as the scalp and skull. TBIs can be classified based on severity, mechanism (closed or penetrating head injury), or other features (e.g., occurring in a specific location or over a widespread area).</p> <p>Concussion refers to a mild TBI and can often go undiagnosed. Symptoms vary amongst individuals and may include symptoms such as fatigue, headaches, visual disturbances, memory loss, and poor concentration.</p>
Health and Safety Advice	An opinion or recommendation about managing a business' health and/or safety risks.
Health and Safety Assessment	<p>A health and safety assessment evaluates risk generated in the workplace or in the work process with objectives to remove, reduce and replace the source of risk with safer equipment or processes, or to lessen the risk to the health and safety of the workers</p> <p>This may include assessment at an organisational, business unit or site specific level.</p>
Health and Safety Assurance	Evaluating health and safety management system effectiveness to provide confidence to management on whether the system is fit-for-purpose.
Health and Safety Management Systems	Facilitating the development of a health and safety management system which includes organisational structure, planning activities, responsibilities, policy, procedures, processes and resources, for developing, implementing, reviewing and maintaining positive workplace health and safety practices.
Health and Safety Policies	Guide management in the development of a statement of intent which details their commitment to achieving the company's health and safety objectives.
Health and Safety System Performance	Measuring the effectiveness of the workplace health and safety management system.
Heart / Vascular Disease	Diseases that involve the heart or blood vessels. Cardiovascular disease includes coronary artery diseases (CAD) such as angina and myocardial infarction (commonly known as a heart attack). Other CVDs are stroke, hypertensive heart disease, rheumatic heart disease, cardiomyopathy, heart arrhythmia, congenital heart disease, valvular heart disease, carditis, aortic aneurysms, peripheral artery disease, and venous thrombosis.
Hydration	Hydration refers to the amount of water in the body. As humans are approximately 60% water and rely on being well-hydrated for optimal performance, being under-hydrated can negatively affect both work performance and health.
Individual Computer Workstation Set-up and Advice	Assessing and providing education/guidance on workstation equipment and its adjustment, and on work methods including break practices and exercise to maintain health, comfort and performance at work a.k.a 'workstation audits or assessments'.
Injuries from Animals	<p>Traumatic injuries directly caused by animals, usually impact trauma (kicks, bites, headbutts, stomping, crushing, falls from an animal etc.). Also includes scratches, which depending on injury site can be more or less serious (e.g. eYES).</p> <p>Animals (living or dead) can also be a source of illness and disease.</p>
Injury / Illness Management / Treatment	Education, intervention and/or procedures that are undertaken or established to assist workers to stay at, or return to, work following injuries, or illness. Injury management teams may be necessary to provide skilled support for injured workers, with different professionals taking complementary roles.
Injury / Illness Management / Treatment - Injury and Discomfort Prevention	Workplace and system design, education, or procedures to reduce injury or discomfort to workers.
Injury / Illness Management / Treatment - Injury and Illness Rehabilitation	Specific tailored advice and intervention to assist the worker to remain at or return to work following injury or illness.

Injury / Illness Management / Treatment - Pain and Discomfort Management	Assessing an individual in their job to identify factors contributing to discomfort, in order to prevent more significant pain or injury. This will include the provision of education/guidance on workstation equipment and its adjustment, and on work methods including break practices, exercises in order to maintain health and comfort at work.
Job Demand Analysis / Task Analysis	Evaluating task or job requirements to assess the physical, functional and/or cognitive demands on workers. This can be used as a pre-requisite for developing a physical, functional or cognitive capacity evaluation or to set baseline requirements for a task/job.
Manual Handling	Manual handling is any activity requiring a person to interact with their environment and use any part of their muscles or skeletal system to lift, lower, push, pull, carry, throw, move, restrain or hold any animate or inanimate object.
Manual Handling Injuries	Injury (gradual or acute) caused by any activity requiring a person to interact with their environment and use any part of their muscles or skeletal system to lift, lower, push, pull, carry, throw, move, restrain or hold any animate, or inanimate, object.
Medical Certification	A medical assessment done when a business or undertaking wishes to be sure a worker can safely do a specific job or task. The purpose is to determine if medically the worker can perform the job or task under the working conditions. Also see fitness for work.
Mental Disabilities or Impairment	<p>A mental impairment is defined as “any mental or psychological disorder, such as an intellectual disability (formerly termed “mental retardation”), organic brain syndrome, emotional or mental illness, and specific learning disabilities.”</p> <p>This may manifest in a slower pace of learning for individuals with learning difficulties due to dyspraxia or dyslexia, arrested brain development (due to lack of oxygen at birth, foetal alcohol syndrome and other developmental problems). In some people there can be significant impairment of intelligence and social functioning and is associated with abnormally aggressive or seriously irresponsible conduct.</p>
Mental Health Issues in the Workplace	<p>In any organisation there will be a range of mental health experiences across employees and this will change over time. This range includes people experiencing optimal/'positive' mental health, people who are mentally unwell (and/or have a diagnosed mental illness which may or may not be being treated), people who lack general mental wellbeing (usually disengaged and unmotivated people who lack meaning or purpose in their daily lives), and people who don't meet the criteria for a diagnosable mental illness but may be highly stressed or distressed due to home or work life or a traumatic event.</p> <p>Health issues can manifest in a variety of ways in the workplace. The two most significant ways in which workplaces experience poor physical and mental health of employees is through increased absenteeism (when workers are off sick), and increased presenteeism (when workers are at the workplace but not mentally engaged with work).</p>
Mental Overload / Underload	Consideration of the overall mental load of operators performing tasks. Mental workload includes expertise, memory, attention, situation awareness, and social and organisational factors as well as other internal and external factors. Work performance may be impacted by both mental overload and underload.
Moving and Handling (Manual Handling) Training	Specialist advice and training in lifting and handling, including risk assessment, specific to the nature of the work and workers.
Moving and Handling of People and/or Animals Training	Specialist advice and training in handling people or animals, including risk assessment and use of equipment, specific to the nature of the work and workers.
Occupational Overuse Syndrome (OOS) or Repetitive Strain Injury (RSI)	An umbrella term covering a range of disorders characterised by pain and/or other sensations in muscles, tendons, nerves, soft tissues and joints with clinical signs evident to a medical practitioner. Symptoms such as pain, discomfort, and muscle weakness may continue even after initial clinical signs have diminished and tend to develop gradually and worsen over time if not addressed. The disorders are caused, or significantly contributed to, by occupational factors including prolonged muscle tension, repetitive actions, forceful movements and sustained or constrained postures, which exceed the usual ability of the body to rapidly recover.
Pain and Discomfort	<p>Pain and discomfort is subjective, though discomfort is usually regarded as a less serious form of pain. People who experience pain or discomfort may or may not have an identifiable injury, and the amount pain or discomfort someone experiences does not necessarily relate to the amount of any tissue damage or severity of an injury. Pain and discomfort can itself lead to injury, where the right combination of contributing factors exist.</p> <p>Pain and discomfort can manifest from traumatic injury or illness (from minor to very severe), gradual process conditions, and strains and sprains (including back/neck pain). Aside from trauma, usually it is as a result of a body being used in a way it is not designed to do comfortably.</p>
Physical Disabilities or Impairment	<p>[Also see Mental Disabilities or Impairment]</p> <p>A physical disability or impairment is a limitation on a person's physical functioning, mobility, dexterity or stamina. More specifically this may affect a person's mobility, hand function, sight, hearing, or speech within a work setting. Other physical disabilities include impairments which limit other facets of daily living, such as respiratory disorders, blindness, epilepsy and sleep disorders.</p>

Pregnancy	<p>Pregnancy can affect the body and mind, impacting on energy levels, physical mobility, and general feelings of wellness. Pregnant people can also suffer from side-effects (ranging in severity) including nausea, insomnia, back pain, and mood changes.</p> <p>Employers have a legal obligation to accommodate pregnancy-related needs unless the accommodation will cause undue hardship. Undue hardship considers factors such as health, safety and cost. The pregnant staff member, the employer, and other parties, such as union representatives, must cooperate and compromise to find reasonable and practical solutions.</p>
Repetitive Tasks	Activities that require the same physical actions to be performed repeatedly may expose workers to greater injury risk than from one-off tasks due to demands placed on the muscles, other soft tissues and the skeletal system. Consideration should be given to task variation, work-rest routines, and individual strength and fitness.
Respiratory Illness / Asthma (Review Name)	Disease of the airways and lungs. Respiratory diseases range from mild and self-limiting, such as a cough or the common cold, to life-threatening entities like bacterial pneumonia, pulmonary embolism, acute asthma and lung cancer.
Risk Management Systems	Providing advice about systems that enable the setting of priorities based on risk assessment, establishing efficient and consistent risk reduction policies, evaluating the range of risk reduction alternatives, identifying cost-effective risk reduction measures, and identifying risk mitigation and contingency measures.
Sedentary Work	Non physically-demanding work activities (usually in sitting), that do not require large range changes of position or place much cardiovascular load on the body.
Selection and Use of Equipment for Moving and Handling of People and/or Animals	Specialist advice on selection and use of any appliance used to moving and handling people and/or animals, for example patient lifters.
Selection and Use of Lifting Equipment for Material Handling	Advice on selection and use of any appliance used for lifting or moving material, (eg lifting beams or stillages)
Selection and Use of Lifting Equipment for People Handling	Advice on selection and use of any appliance used for lifting or moving people (eg patient handling).
Slips, Trips and Falls	Slips are loss of traction events (usually with the feet); trips are when a step is disrupted by contact with an object. Both slips and trips may result in a fall, though falls may also occur for other reasons. Falls are when a loss of balance or other event occurs, causing the body to fall due to gravity onto a lower surface.
Sprains, Strains and Bruises	<p>Injuries that involve body tissues apart from bone are generally classified as soft tissue injuries. Sprains, strains and bruises are all soft tissue injuries, although the cause and tissues involved in each injury are different.</p> <p>A sprain is an injury that involves the ligaments (tough bands of fibrous tissue that connect two bones together in joints) and other soft tissues around a joint, such as an ankle or wrist. A sprain stretches or tears the ligaments.</p> <p>A strain occurs away from a joint and involves a torn or overstretched muscle or tendon (the fibrous cord of tissue that connects muscles to bones), commonly in the calf, thigh or lower back. A strain stretches or tears the muscle or tendon.</p> <p>A bruise is a soft tissue injury that involves the skin and nearby tissues following a blow or other forces that break a blood vessel close to the surface of the body. Bruising may be seen with either a sprain or strain.</p>
Stress and Anxiety	<p>Stress describes the physical or emotional response to demands or pressures that people may experience from time to time. Common causes of stress include work, money, relationships and illness. Symptoms may include irritability, difficulty sleeping or relaxing, headaches and muscle tension.</p> <p>Anxiety, particularly ongoing, all-over anxiety or Generalised Anxiety Disorder (GAD), is where the level and frequency that people experience stress, distress, dismay, and worry is greatly increased. It is common for people with GAD to have other conditions such as depression, or other anxiety-related disorders like panic attacks and obsessive-compulsive disorder.</p>
Training / Education	Providing education, training or facilitation in health and safety-related topics.
Traumatic Injury	Physical harm arising from a single accident or event and defined by the degree of physical incapacity.
Violence in the Workplace	The provision of advice in the management of workplace risks associated with people who use, or threaten to use, violence, including use of weapons or firearms, intimidation, violent assaults, demanding with menaces and robbery in a workplace. e.g. Assault/robbery, armed offenders. Also see Bullying, and Abuse or Harassment.
Wellbeing and Work-life Balance	<p>Wellbeing, welfare or wellness is a general term for the condition of an individual or group, for example their social, economic, psychological, spiritual or medical state. A high level of wellbeing means in some sense the individual or group's condition is positive, while low wellbeing is associated with negative happenings.</p> <p>Work-life balance is a concept including proper prioritizing between "work" (career and ambition) and "lifestyle" (health, pleasure, leisure, family and spiritual development/meditation).</p>
Wellness	Wellness is the optimal state of health of individuals and groups. There are two focal concerns: the realisation of the fullest potential of an individual physically, psychologically, socially, spiritually and economically, and the fulfilment of one's role expectations in the family, community, place of worship, workplace and other settings.
Worker Engagement, Participation and Representation	Working with organisations to help them involve their workers in workplace health and safety.
Worker Performance	Human performance is dynamic, a combination of physical and mental functions upon which external and internal influences may impact. Mental workload includes the notions of expertise, memory, attention, situation awareness, and social and organisational factors, whilst physical workload includes the loads handled, distance travelled, speed of performance and many other factors. Human performance is often defined in terms of efficiency, capability and limitations, but may be measured in many ways.
Workplace and Equipment Design	The design of workplaces or work equipment to optimise health and safety and productivity.
Workplace Assessments - General	A scoping assessment to identify when to bring in a specialist.

Workplace Assessments - Specialist	An in-depth assessment of worker, work tasks, techniques, workload, equipment and environment. The scope and nature of a workplace assessment can vary considerably depending on the needs of the business.
Workplace Design	The designing of workplace physical environments, work processes, work methods, and tools/equipment/plant to maximise productivity and reduce injury and health risks. (See "Work system design" for more complex requirements).
Workstation Assessment	An in-depth assessment of the immediate area accessed by a worker when performing a specific task or job cycle.
Workstation Assessment - Workstation and Environment Setup Advice for People with Disabilities	Provision of specialist advice for workstation, work task and work environment setup for people with disabilities (eg wheelchair users, those with vision impairment, or people with physical or mental/cognitive impairment) to enable optimal participation in the workforce.