

A/PROF PRUE CORMIE – WHAT IS AN EXERCISE PHYSIOLOGIST?

Referral to an appropriate health professional is essential to ensuring patients receive a safe and effective exercise regime. And that health professional is an exercise physiologist.

Exercise physiologists or EPs are university qualified allied health professionals who specialise in the delivery of exercise. As an exercise physiologist I use exercise as a medicine to help manage disease and to improve the health and wellbeing of patients.

To realise the therapeutic effects of exercise we use targeted exercise prescriptions based on the physiological changes required to improve health. Understanding what happens inside our bodies when we exercise allows us to prescribe exercise in a similar way doctors prescribe medications & therapies. The prescriptions involve specific types of exercises, performed at precise intensities and volumes based on a mechanism of action and dosage needed to elicit a targeted adaptation.

Exercise physiologists are also trained to facilitate long term behaviour change and help patients overcome barriers to participating in exercise. They differ from physiotherapists who instead specialise in the rehabilitation of function following acute issues such as injuries and operations. Services provided by exercise physiologists can be eligible for rebates through Medicare and an increasing number of private health insurers.

Currently there are over 3,500 accredited exercise physiologists practicing throughout Australia and you can find an exercise physiologist close to your home using an online directory of the accrediting body – Exercise and Sports Science Australia.

