

Careers in the area of Rehabilitation

Professor Steve Selig: practicing clinical exercise physiologist

What are the main types of careers in the Rehab area?

1. Hospital rehabilitation
 - Restoration of function and 2nd degree prevention for in-patients and out-patients
2. Medical rehabilitation (clinics and rehabilitation facilities):
 - 1st and 2nd degree prevention, and restoration of function for patients referred by medical practitioners or other health professionals
3. Sports rehabilitation
 - Return to training and competition for injured athletes
 - Injury Prevention ⇔ Conditioning
4. Occupational rehabilitation
 - Return to work programs (RTW)
 - Injury Prevention ⇔ Work Conditioning
5. Community rehabilitation
 - 1st and 2nd degree prevention, and restoration of function for clients referred by medical practitioners / physiotherapists / self-referred
 - Aged Care and Fitness facility clientele
6. Case Management
 - Human Resources Departments
 - Occupational Health & Safety Departments
 - Insurers
7. Community and population health and fitness

What are the main responsibilities involved in the above Rehab careers?

1. Managing risk: benefit ratio for all clients: all services should be directed at producing benefits for clients (see client outcomes below) at low and manageable risk for their participation in physical activity and exercise programs.
2. Accountabilities
 - a. Providing a safe service (see 1, above);
 - b. Providing a competent service;
 - c. Providing an ethical service (eg not cross-promoting commercial products or services whilst providing a professional service);
 - d. Providing services that are recognised and approved by compensable schemes (see below);
 - e. Engaging appropriately with other health professionals, case managers or other individuals or organisations involved in delivering client services;
 - f. Maintaining accurate and current records of all client services for at least 10 years, or longer as prescribed by relevant authorities;

- g. Providing timely and appropriate reports to referring health professionals (usually general practitioners) or other referrers (eg case managers), as required under compensable schemes;
- h. Safeguarding and maintaining the confidentiality and privacy of clients at all times (see also maintaining records, above);
- i. Maintaining a clean and environmentally friendly facility.

Who are your colleagues/clients?

1. Other Accredited Exercise Physiologists (AEP)
2. Allied health professionals – e.g., physiotherapists, podiatrists, dietitians, psychologists, diabetes educators, osteopaths
3. Doctors
4. Nurse Practitioners
5. Academics
6. Researchers in the field
7. Clients:
 - Compensable exercise: e.g., Medicare (Aust.), WorkCover (Qld, NSW, SA, ACT) WorkSafe (Vic), Veterans Affairs, Comcare (Commonwealth Workers Health Scheme), Private Insurers, Transport Accident Commission
 - Non-compensable: e.g., private clients
 - Chronic disease: e.g., type 2 diabetes, arthritis, obesity
 - Disease prevention: e.g., cardio-respiratory/metabolic, musculoskeletal/neurological, apparently healthy

<u>Category</u>	<u>Condition</u>
Cardiopulmonary	Hypertension (HT), coronary artery disease (CAD), peripheral vascular disease (PVD), myocardial infarction (AMI), chronic heart failure (CHF), asthma, COPD, cystic fibrosis (CF)
Metabolic	Obesity, dyslipidaemias, impaired glucose tolerance (IGT), diabetes mellitus (DM)
Musculoskeletal	Arthritides (esp. OA and RA), osteoporosis (OP), sub-acute and chronic specific and non-specific musculoskeletal pain / injuries, surgery, epicondylitis, tendinopathies
Neurological / Neuromuscular	Stroke (CVA), spinal cord injury (SCI), acquired brain injury (ABI), Parkinson's Disease, Multiple Sclerosis (MS)
Other	Cancers, Depression

What experience and qualifications do you need to work in the area of Rehab?

3 – 4 yr Undergraduate degree in Exercise and Sport Science (or equiv) plus Post Graduate degree (usually at Masters level) in Clinical Exercise (or equiv) = total of 5 -6 yrs university study.

At least 500 hours of clinical placement with 140 with apparently healthy clientele, 140 with cardio-respiratory/metabolic clientele, 140 hrs with musculoskeletal/neurological clientele, plus 80 hrs in a clinical area of interest exerciseg. cancer, depression or any of the above mentioned areas (excluding apparently healthy).

To be qualified as an AEP – full membership and Accreditation as an Exercise Physiologist with Exercise & Sport Science Australia (ESSA).

What are the highlights?

Positive client outcomes. See below:

Category	Outcome
Clinical Status	↓ disease progression ↓ risk factors ↓ medications +/- doses ↓ risk of new diagnosis ↓ hospitalisations ↑ knowledge of condition, ↑ motivation, ↑ self-management
Function (fitness)	Long term “healthy addiction” to exercise ↑ injured worker rehabilitation ↑ independent living Return to sport outcomes
Quality of life	↓ medications +/- doses (anti-depressants, sleep) ↓ risk of depression

Advice for students who are interested in working in the area of Rehab?

1. You need a strong study and work ethic and place job satisfaction over dollar rewards (most health professionals do not work for the money, but for other rewards; that said, AEPs can enjoy good earnings once they have established themselves in the profession)
2. You need to be equipped and committed to lifelong learning, particularly self-directed learning
3. You need to enjoy helping people who have health issues
4. You need a passion / strong belief that
 - a. exercise and physical activity can improve the lives of all individuals, particularly those with chronic medical conditions and complex care needs
 - b. our young profession will continue to grow, and you are prepared to contribute to future development of our profession