

## 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 2<sup>nd</sup> degree prevention for in-patients and out-patients
2. Medical rehabilitation (clinics and rehabilitation facilities):
  - 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> 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
  - 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> 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>
<b>Cardiopulmonary</b>	Hypertension (HT), coronary artery disease (CAD), peripheral vascular disease (PVD), myocardial infarction (AMI), chronic heart failure (CHF), asthma, COPD, cystic fibrosis (CF)
<b>Metabolic</b>	Obesity, dyslipidaemias, impaired glucose tolerance (IGT), diabetes mellitus (DM)
<b>Musculoskeletal</b>	Arthritides (esp. OA and RA), osteoporosis (OP), sub-acute and chronic specific and non-specific musculoskeletal pain / injuries, surgery, epicondylitis, tendinopathies
<b>Neurological / Neuromuscular</b>	Stroke (CVA), spinal cord injury (SCI), acquired brain injury (ABI), Parkinson's Disease, Multiple Sclerosis (MS)
<b>Other</b>	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
<b>Clinical Status</b>	↓ disease progression ↓ risk factors ↓ medications +/- doses ↓ risk of new diagnosis ↓ hospitalisations ↑ knowledge of condition, ↑ motivation, ↑ self-management
<b>Function (fitness)</b>	Long term “healthy addiction” to exercise ↑ injured worker rehabilitation ↑ independent living Return to sport outcomes
<b>Quality of life</b>	↓ 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