

How can I find a physio?

Physios have basic training in asthma education. Some have lots of experience because they see more asthma patients. Others are experts because they specialise in treating people with asthma and similar problems.

- Go to your local physio, or
- Go to www.physiotherapy.org.nz and click on 'find a physio', or
- Ask your doctor to recommend a physio.

Check that your physio is a member of Physiotherapy New Zealand. This shows they're committed to high standards of professional practice.

Where can I find out more about asthma?

For online information, we recommend you go to:

- www.physiotherapy.org.nz and type 'asthma' in the search box.
- Asthma Foundation website at www.asthmafoundation.org.nz



www.physiotherapy.org.nz

Physiotherapy New Zealand acknowledges the Cardiothoracic Special Interest Group and Quitline for providing information for this leaflet.

This leaflet does not replace the benefits of a full assessment and programme provided by an expert physio.

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PHYSIOTHERAPY NEW ZEALAND
Kōmiri Aotearoa

Quitline
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**ASTHMA: CALL ON A PHYSIO TO HELP YOU**

- breathe correctly
- stay active
- control coughing
- get rid of mucus



PHYSIOTHERAPY NEW ZEALAND | MOVEMENT FOR LIFE
Kōmiri Aotearoa

What is asthma?

People with asthma have sensitive airways – the ‘tubes’ that carry air in and out of their mouths, noses and lungs. Their airways can tighten, swell up and make too much mucus (the slimy stuff that keeps our airways moist). This makes it hard to breathe in and even harder to breathe out.

If you have asthma you may:

- wheeze (your breath ‘whistles’ when you breathe in and out)
- breathe through your mouth, not your nose
- feel a tightness in your chest
- feel short of breath
- cough

How can I keep on top of my asthma?

It’s really important to manage your asthma so you don’t permanently damage your lungs.

You start with a visit to your doctor. They will help you control your symptoms by using the right medication and having a plan to manage your asthma.

It’s also important you have some sessions with a physio who is experienced in asthma management.

Quitting smoking

Being smoke-free is very important if you have asthma: as a non-smoker you’ll feel more able to be active; and your lungs and airways won’t get messed up by cigarette smoke.

You’ll find excellent support to quit smoking at www.quit.org.nz or call Quitline on 0800 778 778.

Why see a physio if I have asthma?

Your physio helps you learn to manage the physical effects of your asthma.

How you breathe is really important. Many people with asthma feel they need to get more air into their lungs. You may use your chest muscles to breathe air in and out quickly, through your mouth. If you make a habit of this, you’ll start to feel tired and unwell, and be more prone to asthma attacks.

Your physio will teach you how to breathe properly using the correct muscles when you’re resting. This will help you feel relaxed and you won’t make your asthma symptoms worse. They’ll also teach you how to breathe when you’re taking exercise.

Your physio will show you ways to:

- control your cough
- get rid of mucus
- use your inhaler correctly
- cope better with asthma attacks
- work out an exercise plan that’s right for you
- relax so you breathe easier

So asthma needn’t hold me back?

Asthma definitely needn’t hold you back!

Staying active is really important to keep your asthma under control. If there are sports and activities you love, your physio can build these into your exercise plan. You might even find some new things you really enjoy!

As you practice correct breathing, you’ll find you have more energy. You can join in activities and sports without having to stop because you’re wheezing. You may have less need for your inhaler.

Lots of high-performing sports people have asthma – and they work hard to make sure they keep on top of it.

How many times will I need to visit a physio?

Some people need just a few trips to their physio. Others visit more regularly, especially if they’ve recently been sick. After your treatment’s complete, you’ll be well-placed to manage your asthma by yourself. Some people find it helpful to re-visit their physio once a year for a check-up, especially before winter sets in.

To find a physio, see overleaf >>

