

## HIV

Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) is a retrovirus that attacks the human immune system, gradually weakening the body's ability to defend itself. A weakened immune system due to HIV increases the risk of developing opportunistic infections and cancers. Current treatment for HIV works by reducing the amount of HIV in the body, so that the immune system can work properly, however does not cure HIV. People living with HIV and starting treatment before their immune system becomes too damaged, can expect to live a long and healthy life.

For many people living with HIV, periods of good health are often interrupted by periods of illness or disability, also called "episodic disability". Rehabilitation can make the difference to help people living with HIV remain healthy, continue or go back to work, be active in their homes and communities and improve quality of life. Rehabilitation professionals including physiotherapists, work closely within a multidisciplinary team, and will assist people living with HIV to cope with impairments and activity limitations.

Combined cardiovascular and resistance training exercise has very strong evidence, that if performed regularly, can help people living with HIV improve strength, cardiovascular fitness, function, body shape, mood and quality of life. Exercise is safe and effective for people living with HIV and physiotherapists play an important role in supporting people living with HIV overcome barriers to regular exercise, which could include disability, fear or stigma.

HIV is both preventable and treatable; however people living with HIV and people at risk of HIV often face stigma and discrimination from friends, family, colleagues and health care providers. Stigma

can manifest in many ways and can have potentially devastating consequences on care-seeking behaviour.

Stigma can be challenged by raising awareness of HIV and the impact stigma can have and by addressing unwarranted fears of HIV transmission. Encouraging those around us to talk about HIV and find out the facts can help overcome this.

There are a range of resources available on HIV, some of them aimed specifically at healthcare workers (Public Health England, RHIVA and CUHRRRC), others dealing with workplace health and safety issues (HSE, TUC and CSP) and others aimed at the general public with the purpose of raising awareness about the condition (National Aids Trust, NAM, THT and Positively UK).

## **Public Health England**

HIV and AIDS – information and guidance in an occupational setting.

[http://www.hpa.org.uk/web/HPAweb&HPAwebStandard/HPAweb\\_C/1195733818951](http://www.hpa.org.uk/web/HPAweb&HPAwebStandard/HPAweb_C/1195733818951)

The Management of HIV infected Healthcare Workers who perform exposure prone procedures: updated guidance, January 2014

[http://www.hpa.org.uk/webc/HPAwebFile/HPAweb\\_C/1317140704390](http://www.hpa.org.uk/webc/HPAwebFile/HPAweb_C/1317140704390)

## **The Rehabilitation in HIV Association (RHIVA)**

RHIVA is a group of Allied health Professionals (AHPs) including Physiotherapists, Occupational Therapists and Speech and Language

Therapists, specialising in the field of HIV rehabilitation. RHIVA supports HIV rehabilitation professionals and rehabilitation professionals in non-HIV settings. RHIVA also champions the rehabilitation agenda for people living with HIV and leads on research and best practice. RHIVA is professionally associated with the British HIV Association (BHIVA) and liaises with the CSP, College of Occupational Therapists (COT) THE Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists (RCSLT)

<http://www.bhiva.org/RHIVA.aspx>



[www.facebook.com/RehabHIV](http://www.facebook.com/RehabHIV) @RehabHIV

(Please feel free to link to the official RHIVA Facebook pages and Twitter account via the pictures)

## **Canada-UK HIV Rehabilitation Research Collaborative (CUHRRC)**

CUHRRC is an international research collaborative that includes people living with HIV, researchers, clinicians, representatives from AIDS service organisations, and policy stakeholders in Canada and the United Kingdom (UK), Ireland and the United States of America (USA) with an interest in HIV and rehabilitation research.

<http://cuhrrc.hivandrehab.ca/>

## **Health and Safety Executive**

Risk to healthcare workers – blood borne viruses (BBV)

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/biosafety/blood-borne-viruses/risk-healthcare-workers.htm>

## **CSP**

Health and Safety Briefing Pack 9: Workplace Infection Risks

<http://www.csp.org.uk/documents/workplace-infection-risks>

## **Trades Union Congress (TUC)**

Information about how employers need to address the problems and prejudices surrounding HIV and those who are living with it, including frequently asked questions.

[http://www.worksmart.org.uk/health/HIV and AIDS](http://www.worksmart.org.uk/health/HIV_and_AIDS)

## **National Aids Trust**

<http://www.nat.org.uk/>

## **NAM**

<http://www.aidsmap.com/>

## **The Terence Higgins Trust (THT)**

<http://www.tht.org.uk/>

## **Positively UK**

<http://positivelyuk.org/>