IN BRIEF

PHYSIOTHERAPY
WORKING AT THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS

Since 1979, the ICRC’s Physical Rehabilitation Programme has supported more than 300 projects in over 100 countries, and we currently employ over 1,000 staff in 41 countries. More than two million people with disabilities have benefited from our physical rehabilitation services: nearly 300,000 per year, either directly or through our partnerships with local organizations. We aim to treat people according to their medical, psychological and social needs and to help them to successfully reintegrate into society. While our goals are similar to those of most other physiotherapists, our approach must be tailored to each context.
WHAT DO WE DO?

After an injury, a patient is assessed by a physiotherapist, either in the hospital or during their first visit to a rehabilitation centre. Patients receive ongoing care at rehabilitation centres and sometimes follow-up within the community.

- We offer rehabilitation care to prevent, reduce or eliminate impairments, especially during the acute phase of treatment, including emergencies.
- Our services include exercise therapy, plaster-of-Paris application, rehabilitation through sport, counselling, education for family and caregivers and general health advice.
- We help to set up and organize physiotherapy services in hospitals and rehabilitation centres. We also support efforts to make those services more accessible.
- We provide various kinds of training (on-the-job, refresher courses and specialist subjects) and help to develop and strengthen formal training programmes as part of national capacity-building.
- We strive to make the invisible visible.
HOW DO WE WORK?

• We work as part of a multidisciplinary team made up of prosthetists/orthotists, surgeons, nurses and other ICRC staff to provide the people we help with comprehensive care.
• We use simple, inexpensive techniques and equipment to ensure our projects are sustainable over the long-term.
• We help to strengthen patients’ links with family and friends so that they can successfully reintegrate into society.
• We work with governments, non-governmental organizations, patient and professional associations and others to strengthen countries’ capacity to provide physical rehabilitation services.
• Mobile physiotherapists ensure the quality of services through structured staff education, the implementation of guiding principles and scientific recommendations and effective project management.
MORE ABOUT PHYSIOTHERAPY

Physiotherapists make it possible to achieve the best possible long-term quality of life. We design and implement evidence-based functional rehabilitation programmes based on an individual’s goals. We also provide guidance on preventing complications, adapting the home and using assistive devices such as prostheses and wheelchairs.
We help people around the world affected by armed conflict and other violence, doing everything we can to protect their lives and dignity and to relieve their suffering, often with our Red Cross and Red Crescent partners.