



Introducing Ethos Wellbeing, a Structured Movement Therapy Programme for Covid-19 patients – Q&A

Thank you for joining the EthosGPS webinar in collaboration with OTAC and Personally ProActive. Below, you will find the Q&A from the webinar on Wednesday 13th May.

If you have any additional questions following the webinar, please email ethos@handicare.com

Should we consider powered mobility or work with physios to improve upper body strength and stick with manual chairs?

Using one's own body strength is the goal, however safety would be our first consideration and if we felt the individual was at risk of a fall or injury we would suggest help from equipment. The lead therapist would need to make the final decision based on a full assessment of the entire scenario.

Can I ask what platform you are using to link with multi clients or is it on a one to one basis?

Sally has used ZOOM as a platform and pre-recorded exercise sessions for multiple client groups. Clients have released email addresses for a 'link share' where they can exercise at their convenience. Amanda has used 'Facebook Live' as a platform for several weekly classes but Amanda has also pre-recorded short videos for her more complex one-to-one clients.

How many times a week do you suggest clients complete the sessions?

Preferably daily or even twice daily with the first 10-minute programme. However, this will depend on the client's clinical status at the time, breathing difficulties and fatigue. The stronger the muscles become the less breathless they will be and the more energy they will conserve even for simple tasks. These SMT sessions are graduated for this very reason. Work at your own pace!

Guidelines in the UK suggest 30 minutes of Cardiovascular exercise on most days of the week and muscle strengthening activities twice a week. However, Covid-19 survivors will take time to reach these guidelines. There is no timescale and individuals should not feel under pressure to achieve these guidelines but set their own goals and take each day as it comes.

What do you think the implications will be to wheelchair users who self-propel?

The SMT programme has been planned and prepared with careful consideration for Covid-19 survivors but because they are 'generic' safe programmes designed rather quickly we were unable to accommodate all clients with added needs. However, we are planning to produce more exercise programmes for clients using mobility equipment such as wheelchairs, stand aids etc. Adaptations for each exercise will be required for clients seated in a wheelchair.

Can I confirm this is suitable for people with underlying health conditions?

Underlying conditions were carefully taken into consideration when we designed the programme. We make it clear before the start of each SMT session that the client is feeling well, that the client has read the pre-exercise information and that they have any prescribed medication to hand for example a breathing reliever or GTN spray. Contra-indications to exercise are also on the Ethos Wellbeing webpage: <https://www.handicare.co.uk/ethos-wellbeing/>. A warm-up and cool down section has been designed and included in each SMT to allow for vaso- dilation and bronch-dilation for efficient delivery of oxygen and reduced likelihood of arrhythmias.

We always suggest starting with the 10-minute SMT, consider how they feel after this and then eventually move on to the next programme.

What considerations are there regarding liability i.e. exercise prescription in the home environment?

Safety is our priority and again careful consideration to contra-indications, pre exercise information, safe working environment to avoid trips or falls, prescribed medication to hand and if exercising alone it is advisable to have a telephone to hand for quick communication if required. The SMT programmes are carefully designed and would be a far safer exercise regime to start with rather than seeking advice on the internet where programmes may not have been designed by qualified fitness or healthcare professionals.

What advice do you have for working with clients who would struggle to follow or retain instructions?

SMT programmes provide easy to follow video recordings, constant teaching points, simple exercises and encouragement. The SMT programmes could work for 90% of people but there will always be a small minority with more complex needs, who find it difficult to follow on their own and may need assistance from a relative or a carer.

Any thoughts on rehab with possible post-viral fatigue or possible development into chronic fatigue symptoms and the need to 'not push through'?

We always recommend clients start with the 10-minute programme where they can decide how many minutes they feel comfortable completing. There is no competition, no set number of repetitions, and we constantly remind individuals to do what they can on the day. They may choose just one part of the SMT to follow in the morning, one part in the afternoon and then judge how they feel. We constantly remind individuals to feel 'comfortably tired' and not 'fatigued'. A good practice is to do one small section of the 10-minute programme and wait until the following day to see how they have reacted. If they feel good perhaps they could try another section and so on. In this way the client is in total control of how much they're able to achieve in a given period of time.

We want clients to feel invigorated and a sense of achievement rather than 'failure', building their confidence gradually.

Does the programme have a timescale?

Absolutely not. These programmes are graduated and allow each individual to rehabilitate in their own way, at their own pace. SMT programmes allow individuals to create their own 'goals' and achieve these with confidence and a feeling of wellbeing.

Each client will be starting their journey to recovery from a different position and differing symptoms of fatigue, breathlessness and muscle weakness. Therefore, it's very important to start with the 10-minute SMT programme and work upwards at their own pace and listen to their own body.

Ethos Wellbeing: <https://www.handicare.co.uk/ethos-wellbeing/>

Handicare YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/user/SystemRoMedic/videos>

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