

## Muscular Dystrophy



Muscular dystrophy is a group of disorders that causes progressive weakness and loss of muscle mass. It is often diagnosed in the early teen years and is more commonly seen in boys. In muscular dystrophy, the body doesn't repair or replace damaged muscle cells, instead they are replaced with fat and scar tissue, leading to loss of muscle mass and muscle weakness. There are many different types of muscular dystrophy, the most common are:

### **Duchene's**

- Duchene's Muscular Dystrophy (DMD) is often diagnosed at an early age (1-3 years old)
- DMD muscle weakness often presents in the muscles around the trunk, hips and shoulders, meaning that sitting independently can become difficult
- Often delicate skills with the arm, hand and fingers are less affected by DMD than larger movements such as walking.
- Between the ages of 5-11 there can be a significant decline in muscle strength, and most children are wheelchair bound by the age of 13

### **Beckers**

- Beckers Muscular Dystrophy (BMD) is a condition that is often less severe than DM.
- People with BMD can live long and happy lives, some begin using a wheelchair in their mid-20s, but a lot of older people with BMD can walk independently, or with the aid of a crutch, cane, or frame.



MD is progressive, meaning that problems will get worse with age. Speed of symptom change will depend on what type of muscular dystrophy, DMD deteriorating more quickly than BMD. As the muscles deteriorate, some people with muscular dystrophy may develop other health conditions involving the heart and lung, however these are often treatable issues.

People with Muscular dystrophy may:

- Have difficulty playing sport
- Have trouble climbing the stairs
- Decrease in ability to walk, run smoothly
- Have calf muscles that are bigger than normal, even though they're weaker.

### **Physios can help with:**

- Aid in staying fit and active and ensuring exercise is consistent and at an appropriate intensity
- Providing programmes to help prolong muscle strength and function and prevent muscle shortening.
- If muscle weakness begins to have an impact on your function, physio can help direct you to appropriate equipment that could be useful to help maintain your independence, as well as exercises to help slow down any deterioration.
- Equipment that is often used with this condition, such as:
  - o Joint braces
  - o Assistive devices for school or work
  - o Bars and rails around the house
  - o Wheelchair



### **Useful Resources**

- <https://www.musculardystrophyuk.org/>
- <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/muscular-dystrophy/>
- <https://www.musculardystrophyuk.org/conditions/duchenne-muscular-dystrophy-dmd>
- <https://www.musculardystrophyuk.org/conditions/becker-muscular-dystrophy>