

FRIUS Functional Restoration Program Overview

There are three general levels of care following a workers compensation injury – Primary, Secondary, and Tertiary (or 1st, 2nd, and 3rd level of care).

Primary care generally involves 1-hour physical therapy 2 to 3 times per week. A referral to Primary-level care tends to happen pretty soon after the injury. The goal is to aid healing, initiate movement, and begin to build back strength in the injured body areas.

For some patients, Primary care isn't enough, so they are referred to Secondary care. Secondary care is often called Work Hardening or Work Conditioning. This involves more intensive physical therapy and work simulation tasks, for multiple hours each day, to help increase a patient's physical capacity, so he/she can successfully return to work.

Tertiary care is a "whole-person" approach to rehabilitation. It is designed for patients who have participated in lower-levels of care but still remain significantly impaired and unable to participate in many aspects of their lives, including full-duty work, home chores, and social activities. At this point in the patient's injury process, the pain has become chronic, which means that additional medical procedures are unlikely to "fix" the problem. During this stage, most patients have begun to feel a lot of stress and worry; they usually aren't sleeping well; they are often "stuck in the house" with little to do; they have become physically deconditioned (with loss of strength and mobility); and are uncertain about their future. Over time, Primary care and medical procedures, which focused solely on the injured body parts, become ineffective for addressing the wide range of issues that are now contributing to chronic pain and disability.

FRIUS is a Tertiary care facility. Our approach is called "Functional Restoration." The general goal is to help increase your level of function to as high as possible, so that you can return to productive activities in your life, including recreation and work. Unlike Primary care, the focus of treatment is not just on your injured body parts. Because this is a "whole person" treatment, we want to help you with all barriers to function that have developed since your injury. Our program is called "interdisciplinary" because a group of experienced professionals from a variety of backgrounds are in the building and available every day to help you get better.

Functional Restoration involves whole body stretching and strengthening exercises to increase your mobility and general physical conditioning, so that you can successfully return to normal life activities. We view symptoms of pain, insomnia, stress, anxiety, depression, negative thoughts, etc. as part of your injury; we want to help you resolve those symptoms as much as possible. Functional Restoration involves extensive education on a variety of topics that are very likely relevant to your injury and pain experience. This education is done individually and in class-room settings. For instance, you can learn about the rules of the workers compensation system and what you can expect to happen until your case resolves; ways of improving and maintaining your general health; and skills to help manage symptoms like stress and pain and to increase positive and hopeful thoughts.