

Speedier recovery from joint-related problems following resort training

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Patients with joint problems such as rheumatism or arthritis who are discharged from hospital often require a significant recovery time before they return to a reasonable degree of mobility. Yvette Bulthuis of the University of Twente IBR Research Institute for Social Sciences and Technology, The Netherlands, researched the effect that an intensive, three-week training programme in a resort would have on these patients. The results show that this multidisciplinary method not only improves physical condition, mobility, functioning and quality of life in both the short and long term, but that it is also no more expensive than traditional approaches to recovery.

Every year in the Netherlands, about 40,000 people are admitted to the hospital with joint-related issues such as severe [rheumatoid arthritis](#) or hip or [knee replacement surgery](#). These numbers will only increase in the years to come due to the aging of the population.

Many of these patients must deal with diminished physical functioning after [hospital discharge](#) because their mobility was limited both before and during their hospital stay. Yvette Bulthuis' research shows that an intensive three-week course of physical training in a resort results in a better quality of life, improved mobility and physical functioning, both in the short term (three weeks) and in the long term (one year after discharge). Patients who underwent the training had less pain, could climb stairs with greater ease and were better able to get out of bed. The three-week training session not only promotes recovery and improves quality of life, but it is also no more expensive when compared to

traditional recovery methods.

Patients received training that had been designed to improve strength, mobility, condition, balance, coordination and physical functioning. The exact nature of the training was individually tailored to the patient's needs and objectives. In addition to the physical side, the training also included psychological aspects such as anxiety reduction.

Standardized and validated instruments for [rheumatism](#) sufferers were used for both the training group and the control group. These instruments measure mobility, pain, physical functioning and [quality of life](#). These measurements were often conducted immediately before hospital discharge, and again at 3, 13, 26 and 52 weeks after discharge.

Bulthuis will receive a PhD based on this research from the Faculty of Behavioural Sciences on 25 November.

Provided by University of Twente

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