

Occupational Therapy Toolkit

Spinal Cord Injury

Functional Limitations:

ADL, IADL, work and leisure impairment

Functional mobility impairment

Muscle weakness/paralysis below level of injury

Impaired or absent sensation below level of injury

Spasticity

Limited ROM, contractures

Pain (musculoskeletal or neuropathic)

Other symptoms and conditions - pressure ulcers, heterotopic ossification, UTI, depression, autonomic dysreflexia above T6 level, pulmonary embolism, DVT, sexual dysfunction, osteoporosis, neurogenic bowel and bladder

Occupational Therapy Intervention:

ADL, IADL, work and leisure training using adaptive equipment and alternative methods, based on level of injury

Functional mobility training using adaptive equipment and alternative methods, based on level of injury

Provide therapeutic activities and exercises to improve ROM reduce spasticity and increase strength in innervated muscles

Assess home safety and functional safety and provide environmental modifications and adaptations

Provide hand splinting to maximize function (short opponens splint, long opponens splint, tenodesis splint, MP block splint, tetraplegia resting hand splint)

Reduce musculoskeletal pain

Provide modalities (ice, superficial heat, TENS, ultrasound)

Instruct in proper body mechanics, energy conservation and joint protection techniques

Assist in developing self-management skills (effective communication, positive coping strategies, stress reduction, physical activity and exercise, medication management, healthy eating, and making informed decisions about medical and alternative treatments)

Therapist Resources:

1. Functional Goals per Level of Injury, www.sci-info-pages.com