

Jonny Hegarty

Clinical Specialist Physiotherapist Trauma & Orthopaedics



What does your job entail?

I work as a clinical Specialist Physiotherapist in Trauma and Orthopaedics across two hospital sites in the Western Trust. The main role of my job is the assessment and rehabilitation of Trauma & Orthopaedic patients. These include patients who have sustained fractures, dislocations, and ligament ruptures. I also assess and rehab Post- Surgery patients such as knee and shoulder surgery. I also work with ACL (Anterior Cruciate Ligament) rehabilitation patients which I find very rewarding. I have access and use of State of the art rehab and testing equipment which allows patients to reach their full potential.

How did you get into this line of work?

Growing up I was always very active and participated in many different sports. My affinity for injuring myself led me onto a Physio table once or twice! I was very fortunate to have an excellent Physio who was passionate about their work and sparked my interest in Physiotherapy. I originally was destined for Medicine but changed to Physiotherapy after gaining an interest and seeing what a good Physiotherapist can do from a patient's perspective.

Outline your career to date?

I began my career working as a locum as Physiotherapy Jobs were very difficult to find when I qualified from UJJ. I went to England to undertake a Masters and was fortunate to gain experience in professional sport with Rugby League and Soccer. I returned home when a job became available and have worked between NHS and sport since. I have been fortunate to have worked in a variety of clinical areas including Respiratory, Neurology and Musculoskeletal Physiotherapy, which have undoubtedly helped me in my current role.

I have had the opportunity to work with athletes and teams in different sports from recreational to Inter-County and International level - including Rugby, GAA, Soccer, Triathlon, Athletics, Gymnastics, Rowing, CrossFit, Motorsport and many others. This experience has brought forward and enhanced my practice which I can use in my NHS work.

I now work between SWAH and Omagh Hospital as a Clinical Specialist in Trauma & Orthopaedics and continue some work in Sports privately ... as my children allow!!

Tell us about your qualifications?

I qualified with a BSc (Hons) in Physiotherapy in 2009. I have completed post-graduate training in Orthopaedics, Sports Medicine and Strength & Conditioning in-line with my current role. I have a special interest in Shoulder and Knee injuries given my clinical and personal experience!

I have also completed training in Neurology, Respiratory and Hydrotherapy which have all added to my skillset as a Physiotherapist.

What qualities do you feel are required for your job – personal and professional?

Personal – Passionate, desire to improve and help others improve. Empathy, which is difficult at times but essential. Good communication skills and being comfortable asking for help.

Professional – Ability to prioritise and organise diary. Things get very busy, especially in the current NHS or a high-level sport setting. Ability to systemise and delegate when appropriate are key skills.

What is the best advice you have ever received?

Always, always ask questions. And never be afraid to say you don't know. That's how we learn.

A little bit more about me ...

I live in Fermanagh with my wife and 2 children. I only learned to swim at 29 on a dare to complete a Triathlon, then fell in love with it.

I love teaching as part of my job, and the feeling of helping someone achieve what they thought was impossible (cheesy I know!)

What advice would you give your 16-year-old self?

Always back yourself. Think of where you would like to be. Work backwards from that goal. Eliminate the unhelpful. Have fun, keep exercising regularly. Don't take things too badly if they don't work out, there is always another way.

