Around the world

For Nigel Tilley, working as a physiotherapist means that no two days are ever the same. He spends the bulk of his time between looking after professional golfers and athletes on the European Tour, which often means that he is abroad for over 35 weeks each year. When back in the UK he’s still very busy, lecturing and teaching, as well as running his private clinics.

‘Some days at work can be 5am to 9pm and others days 9am to 5pm – it depends on the country we’re in, the type of tournament, the day of the week and time of the year! Work is varied and involves performance and biomechanics screening, hands-on assessment, treatment and management of acute and chronic injuries, and helping the golfers in their physical preparation for play.’

Getting into golf

Nigel’s career path began fairly typically, and he went to work for the NHS for 18 months doing rotations. This helped him to decide to focus on musculoskeletal physiotherapy, and he decided to combine this with travel abroad. Nigel moved to the Caribbean and combined outpatient work with a role as Head Physiotherapist with the National Football team. ‘The role gave me great opportunities to work and gain experience with high-level athletes whilst competing in national, World Cup and Olympic qualifying campaigns.’

After returning to the UK, Nigel focused on building up his experience in neuromusculoskeletal and orthopaedic settings, setting up his own practice and working with a professional football team in the Scottish Premier League. ‘In 2008 I began working with the European Tour Physiotherapy Unit and Performance Unit, whom I still work for as a Consultant Physiotherapist at over 25 tournaments each year. This included being part of the physio team for the successful 2012 European Ryder Cup Team in Medinah, Chicago.’

Getting ahead in physiotherapy

Having completed his Masters in Advanced Musculoskeletal Physiotherapy, Nigel highly recommends further study. ‘Doing a postgraduate masters in a specialism is a way of developing high-level assessment, clinical reasoning and treatment skills. It’s also becoming a pre-requisite for many jobs within high level sport.’

Unsurprisingly, Nigel is thoroughly enjoying his current role and plans to stay within sport and golf for the foreseeable future. ‘Physiotherapy is a great job and rewarding career and there is an enormous amount of opportunities and jobs available in the UK and around the world, in a variety of sectors and specialisms.’ Never one to stand still, Nigel is also considering further research and learning, perhaps in the form of a PhD in the future.

Nigel Tilley
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Specialist Musculoskeletal Physiotherapist (Pure Physiotherapy Ltd)
Consultant Physiotherapist (European Tour)