

A RAPID approach to strengthening the Irish physio business

Experienced physiotherapist Mike Murphy has overcome the challenges of the pandemic to start [RAPID](#), a growing clinic focused on rehabilitation, strength, conditioning and sport performance.

As the song goes, when the going gets tough, the tough get going. And in the case of the founder of the Rehabilitation and performance Initiative Dublin (RAPID) clinic, Mike Murphy refused to be daunted by various lockdown challenges and is up and running with a business he hopes will make a difference in the Irish physiotherapy business.

“When the Covid crisis started raging, it felt like it was the worst time in the world to start a small business, but I decided to go ahead. I originally planned to get going in January and then the biggest lockdown struck. But physiotherapy was deemed an essential service so by March we had a steady stream of business as word of mouth spread. Word of mouth is a very important aspect for the physiotherapy business because once someone is happy with how they are getting on, they tend to tell their friends and family about it.

“As people returned to the golf courses and tennis courts and lately gyms, niggles emerged and they were happy to come in and get them checked out. So we’re definitely moving in the right direction.”

Fighting fit

Murphy earned his physiotherapy degree at Trinity College Dublin. He is also a Certified Strength and Conditioning Specialist through the NSCA. He has worked with athletes and patients of all ages and abilities at the renowned Sports Surgery Clinic in Dublin and at the specialist rehabilitation and golf performance WellSport Clinic in Austin, Texas.

After returning from Austin, he continued his education at Trinity College Dublin under the prestigious Foundation Scholarship where he completed his MSc in Sports and Exercise Medicine. He continued to run his own strength and conditioning classes and physio for schools’ rugby teams during this time.

Murphy has a particular interest in golfing injuries and biomechanics. He is a TPI certified Medical professional. He is also a TPI certified Fitness professional and holds a TPI Power certification. He aims to provide a comprehensive program for all golfers from initial injury rehabilitation to elite performance.

Upon completion of his MSc Murphy founded RAPID and is in the process of growing his clinic and continually upgrading his skills in the areas of rehabilitation, strength and conditioning and sport performance.

Murphy told *ThinkBusiness* that he has a particular focus on active treatments and exercise-based rehabilitation.

“Anyone who is willing to make a change and do some exercise is the perfect patient for me. Whether they are 18 and super fit or whether they are 80 and have a lower fitness baseline, I get a really good mix. I have as many young people as I have elderly as clients.”

Another focus for Murphy is preventative care. “It’s not just about getting people out of pain and helping to go on and enjoy sports or live an active life to the full, but how do we make sure it doesn’t happen again? I usually prescribe some kind of strength or aerobic training at least twice a week whether you are already actively cycling, rowing, playing five-a-side football or regularly running. It’s important to spread out the kind of exercise you do. If you are a regular walker or runner, try adding strength exercises too.

“This is particularly important as we grow older. As we age, we lose muscle mass and bone mineral intensity. The strength side of things is often neglected.”

Mind over body

The variety of injuries and ailments that Murphy treats can be broad, everything from a professional athlete to an individual doing DIY. “A typical thing I found was at the start of Covid you would have people who were in lockdown who suddenly decided to pain the four walls of their livingroom after looking at the same walls for 10 years. And they’d come in with a sore shoulder. The problem wasn’t that they painted the house, the problem was they hadn’t moved their shoulder above their head for at least 10 years.

“Once you sort out the initial issue and get them out of pain, I always like to help them to become stronger to the point where they don’t have to come back to me every two or three months.”

Murphy has established his clinic at the Beechlawn Industrial Complex in Walkinstown, Dublin.

Looking to the future of the business Murphy believes a community-based approach to wellness, particularly for over 65s, is the correct route and he has established his Master’s Programme.

The Master’s Programme is a physio-led strength and exercise class aimed at older members of the community, keeping them fit and active and ensuring that they stay as mobile and independent as possible as they age.

“We keep them fit and target whatever their individual weaknesses are. We have over 65s who can squat and deadlift and lift heavy weights as well. I create a worksheet for them to get through that is targeted to the individual’s ability. And that for me bridges the gap between finding pain and preventing pain. I focus on getting away from the boring old physio exercises that everyone can complete easily to help really push things and combine the rehab and injury work with performance, strength and conditioning work.”

As well as a surge in injuries from golf and DIY, Murphy says he is also seeing injuries related to people working from home and often these come from sitting still or in a particular position for hours or not taking enough exercise.

“The advice I give is to take a 20-minute walk in the morning or after lunch or try and take walking phone calls rather than sitting still. And just try and move around every 40 minutes, because we’re definitely not made to be stuck in one position for most of the day.”

As well as helping transform the physio marketplace, Murphy is also focused on continuously developing his skills and knowledge.

“The best thing a physio can do and the single greatest gift they have is their education. So, just as important as what my hands and my exercises can fix is how I tell them to think about an injury, and that’s probably the most powerful thing I have.”

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