

PHYSIOTHERAPY

inmotion

SEPTEMBER 2012

Roads less travelled:

who knows where you'll go?



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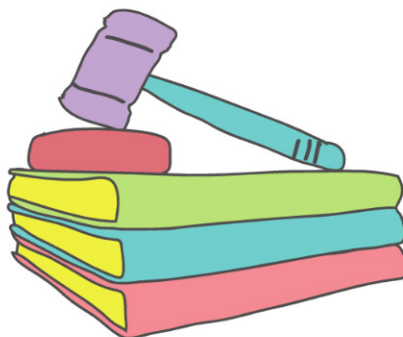
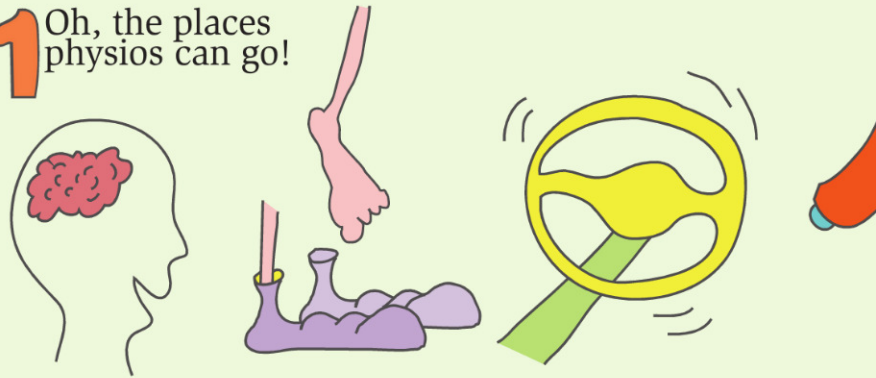
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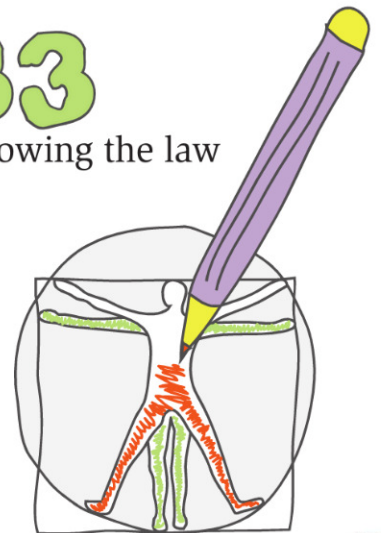
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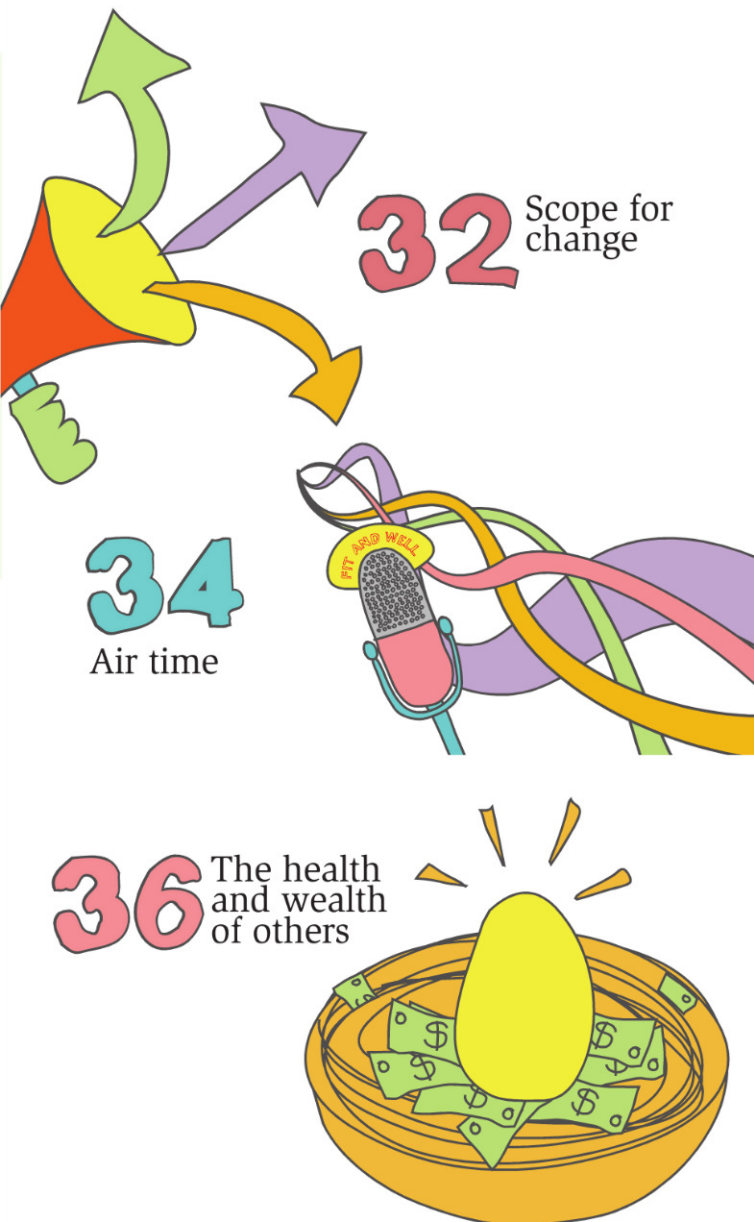
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on the move

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on the move

A Physiotherapist's Guide to Managing Knee Osteoarthritis



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EDITOR'S LETTER

Who among us hasn't heard of Dr Seuss, he of the absurdly imaginative stories with their zany characters, whimsical rhyme and polychromatic drawings? Among the author's most celebrated books are *Green Eggs and Ham*, *The Cat in the Hat* and *How the Grinch Stole Christmas*. Dr Seuss's final book before his death, *Oh, the Places You'll Go!* was first published in 1990 and remains a perennial favourite gift for significant milestones such as graduations.

And why not? The book basically is about the journey of life and the challenges faced along the way. Besides, with lines such as 'And will you succeed? Yes! You will, indeed! (98 3/4 percent guaranteed.)', how can you possibly not consider giving *Oh, the Places You'll Go!* to someone about to embark on a new or significant phase of their life?

So that leads me to this month's *InMotion*, for which we have drawn inspiration from Dr Seuss and in particular *Oh, the Places You'll Go!* We thought it would be interesting to look at the career paths taken by physiotherapists, not so much within the profession itself or as an alternative to physiotherapy, but rather as a

professional pursuit that is different yet in some way complementary to physiotherapy practice.

I should emphasise that each of the five individuals featured in this issue are APA members and all but one still practise physiotherapy (to varying extents). So we're not trying to promote an exodus from the profession; instead, we aim to highlight the options available for physiotherapists to expand their horizons, to follow their passions, and to travel different paths, all the while drawing on their physiotherapy experiences and knowledge.

Consider the following featured members: Jennifer Fitzgerald is the CEO of Scope, a disability provider in Victoria; Margaret Grant combines physiotherapy and law; Paul Coburn juggles multiple physiotherapy roles with a regular radio segment; Kathryn Skelsey is striving to find the right balance between science (physiotherapy) and art (medical illustration); and Dimos Fessopoulos aims to keep practising despite now being a full-time financial planner.

Turn to page 31 to discover the places these members have gone and how they got there.

Marko Stechiwskyj

INSIDE QUOTE P33

'I SEE MYSELF AS A PHYSIO WHO'S ALSO A LAWYER, RATHER THAN A PHYSIO WHO'S GONE OFF TO BE A LAWYER.'

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OH, WHERE physios can go!

On 21st birthdays and university graduations, Dr Seuss's *Oh, the Places You'll Go!* is often given as an inspiring gift. The author's colourful, slightly psychedelic story can be read as an allegory for life or a career, both of which can be winding and unusual.

We all know that the scope of physiotherapy practice is very broad, often unbelievably so, but sometimes a passion lies outside even that

broad scope. All but one of the individuals interviewed for the following pages are still practising in some capacity; however, they all have shifted their career focus in another direction to varying degrees, and their physiotherapy background continues to have a positive impact on their other careers. Oh, and all of them are APA members.

The following stories are not about giving physiotherapy away. Rather they are about

highlighting alternative paths that often lead to complementary places where physiotherapists can draw on their experiences and knowledge to do what they do best: help others in need.

In the spirit of travelling down different paths, **Marko Stechiwskyj** writes about the APA members whose physiotherapy careers have diversified and taken them to other places.

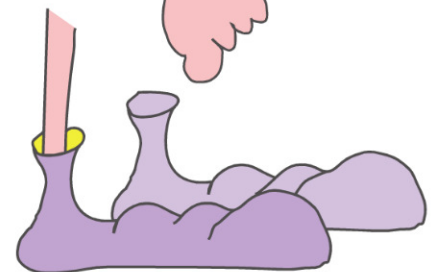


**You have brains
in your head.**

**You have feet
in your shoes.**



**You can steer
yourself any
direction you
choose.**



(Words from *Oh, the Places You'll Go!* by Dr Seuss)

When art and science meet

Some regard art and science as opposite disciplines that rarely intersect. However, this fails to take into account Leonardo da Vinci. A true polymath, he was simultaneously a painter, sculptor, writer, architect, inventor, anatomist, and more. Granted, da Vinci was a genius, but nonetheless he epitomised both artist and scientist rolled into one. It's that duality of art and science that Kathryn Skelsey, APAM, is aiming to uphold.

Neither art nor science has ever strayed far from Skelsey's thinking or aspirations. When the time came at high school to weigh up her future career, she focused on two choices. She knew that she was good at science and she wanted to care for people, so she put the two together and came up with physiotherapy. However Skelsey was equally adept at art and so considered becoming a graphic artist. 'But I didn't want to be under pressure with that... I just wanted to enjoy my art,' she said.

Physiotherapy won out and Skelsey duly went on to complete her qualifications and gain employment as a physiotherapist in Sydney. Nonetheless, she never abandoned her desire to pursue art. 'That had always been the plan... to at some stage get into the art; lay down the foundations as a physiotherapist, get a stable job, earn the money and then throw myself into the art,' she said.

To that end, Skelsey worked towards completing her Bachelor of Fine Arts (Painting and Drawing) degree part time while she continued practising, also part time, at St George Public Hospital and then Sydney Children's Hospital, Randwick. It was while working at the latter that she hooked up with the medical illustration unit there to attain some hands-on experience, by collaborating on a couple of projects.

These days Skelsey juggles two part-time jobs: as a physiotherapist at the Metabolic

Rehabilitation Clinic at Camden Hospital, and a research assistant for The University of Sydney. She is also a self-employed artist and illustrator through her business HealthArt Illustration. As an artist she has exhibited her conceptual work, and she has been commissioned to provide medical illustrations for a journal article, a book, even a conference presentation. She is currently doing various projects, such as illustrations for exercise program handouts.

'I still enjoy my physiotherapy so much that I do a lot of courses and webinars; the APA has been great with that recently. I'm lapping up all this information at the moment and perhaps not spending enough time on developing my art skills,' said Skelsey, who finds that art has a meditative effect. 'It's easy to be too active and not allow yourself to relax. Burn out is something I think physios really need to watch out for because they're mentally and physically engaged all day. That can really wear you out; you need something else...'

To Skelsey, art and science, specifically physiotherapy, are not mutually exclusive. Rather, they are complementary.

'Physiotherapy is about communication. You need to talk to people, to observe and assess... I love communicating with people... educating them, spending time with them, thrashing out exactly what their goals are and guiding them with my knowledge so that they take a better path with their health,' she said.

'It's similar with illustration. It's not just purely about self-expression; it's about communicating with the client about their brief, and working out the best way of approaching it... you need to be able to think and look at it from all angles so that

you produce the best possible image for them which will explain something and tell a story.

'I think it [art] gives me a balance. I definitely value evidence-based practice and keeping up to date with current knowledge, but at the same time I do think I have more of an artistic personality, and it's important to go with your intuition on certain things. Each has their place.'

Just like da Vinci, Skelsey is keen to maintain her art and her science. Skelsey is open to opportunities to move into research, but also wants to extend her repertoire as a medical illustrator. 'Physios are well trained in anatomy and physiology... so it's a perfect position for me to be in, as a medical illustrator,' she said. 'I find the body a fascinating subject, both healthwise and artwise.'

