

Medicine's Modern Methods Hasten Recovery for Canadian Battle Casualties



Convalescents, crutches strewn about, lie on lawn of Oakville, Ont., cast and retraining centre to hear lecture by corporal on educational courses open to soldiers, airmen, and naval personnel in other branches of service.

Injured Canadian servicemen are getting the best in modern medical treatment at hospitals operated by the Department of Pensions and National Health.

An innovation in the practice of medicine but becoming more widely used, physiotherapy treatment has been instituted in the program of treating the injured. It provides treatment for nearly every type of illness, affecting the whole period of hospitalization and illness. Physiotherapeutic treatment has proved its worth innumerable times in rapidly bringing to returned soldiers the use of limbs injured by fractures.

Painful, incurable diseases and the aged, chronic sick cannot be treated by physiotherapy, nor is it used in the early stages of diseases whose treatment calls for a period of absolute rest.

Bed patients are treated individually before operations, particularly thoracic and abdominal surgery, by tutored breathing exercises to strengthen lungs and diaphragm, correct breathing so that post-operative treatment will be more effective. Other individual treatment to bed patients includes physiotherapy treatment in post-operative cases, recent injuries and in the early stages of certain medical conditions.

In groups in the wards treatment includes general exercises in the post-operative period and general and local calisthenics for treating recent injuries, and specialized, local and general exercises for medical conditions such as convalescent pneumonia, heart cases, arthritis.

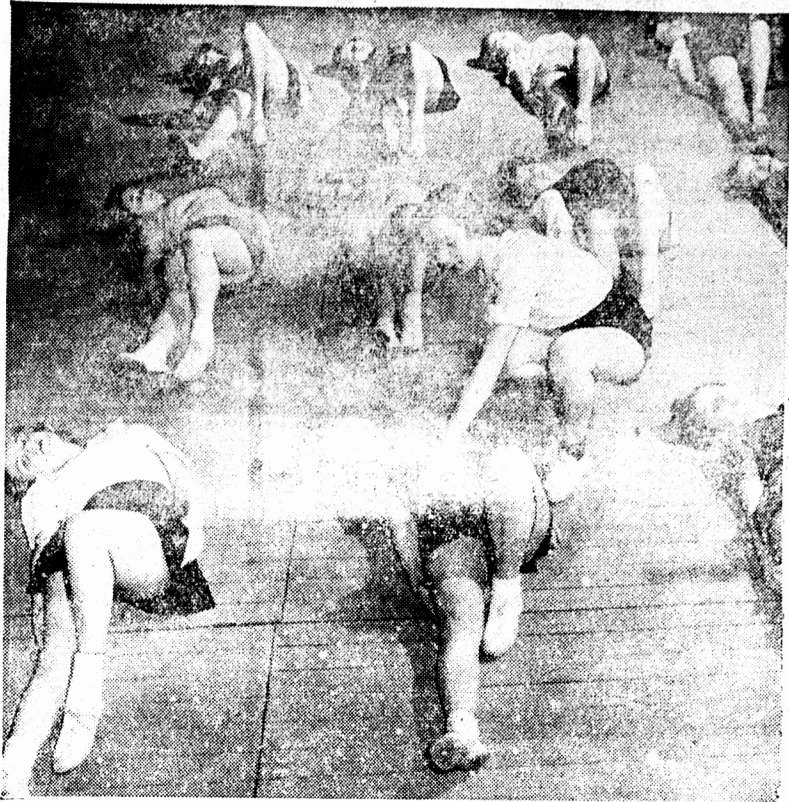
Medical officers and physiotherapy aides begin to treat chair patients in groups in the ward after they have progressed from the bed stage, doing stronger local and general exercises. The medical officer grades the patient up through six stages from almost complete immobility to fitness.

Ambulatory cases, those able to move under their own power, are treated in the gymnasium with progressively stronger exercises, until they are graded to the full physical training course given by professional physical training men. Finally, if necessary, armed services patients continue their treatment in a Department of Pensions and National Health hospital.

By physiotherapy, convalescence is shortened, the evil effects of the disuse of limbs and muscles is avoided, the "cripple complex"—a hindrance in the recovery of any injured person—is evaded.

In hospitals and army camps from coast to coast, top-notch medical men, husky physical training athletes and pretty physiotherapy aides are putting young men through a scientifically planned curriculum of exercises, keeping injured joints in movement; building up muscle preparatory to treating it, perhaps by surgery; breaking down atrophy of muscles and nerves by electricity and exercise.

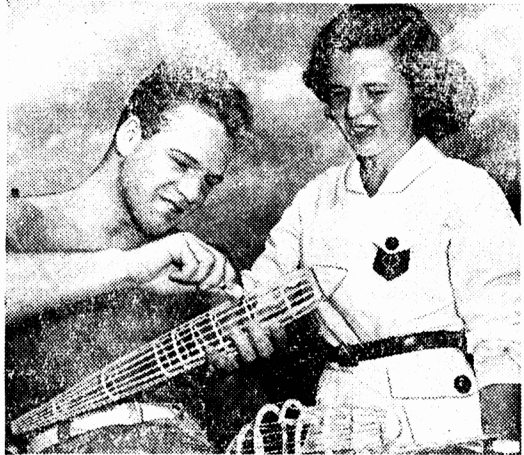
All branches of the forces have their own physiotherapy aides and occupational therapists, university and hospital trained, who return from time to time to take refresher and advanced courses as the art of healing through activity in conjunction with medical treatment makes progress.



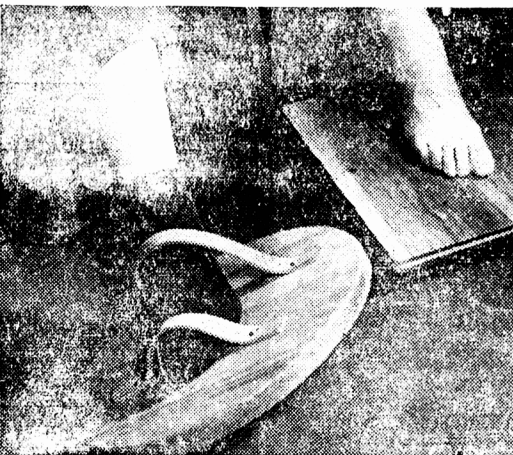
Second year therapy students at Toronto University take four hours a week of exercises in gym to keep them fresh in training, acquaint them with the difficulties of instructing others. One of the students acts as instructor.



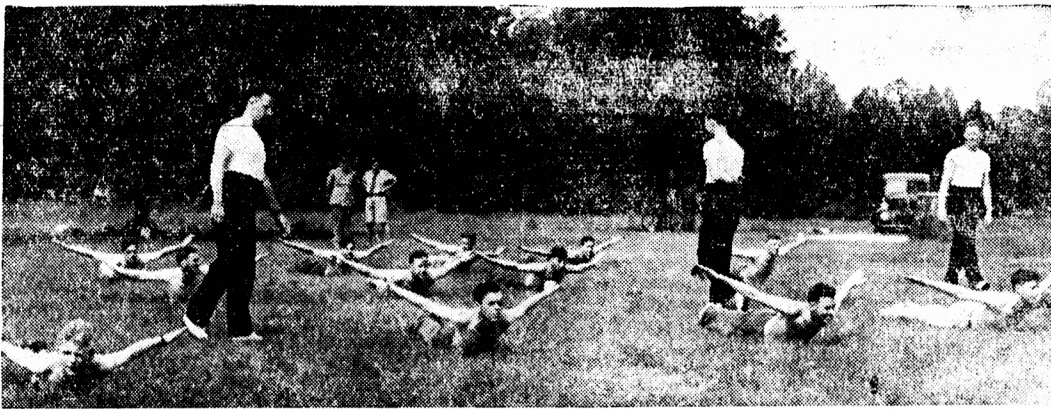
Sgt-Major V. Wambolt, suffering from broken knee, practices walking again on treadle. Canvas belt on rollers gives walking sensation, handrail support.



Bed-ridden patients have their own occupational therapy jobs to do. This Christie Street patient makes model airplanes as therapist inspects work.



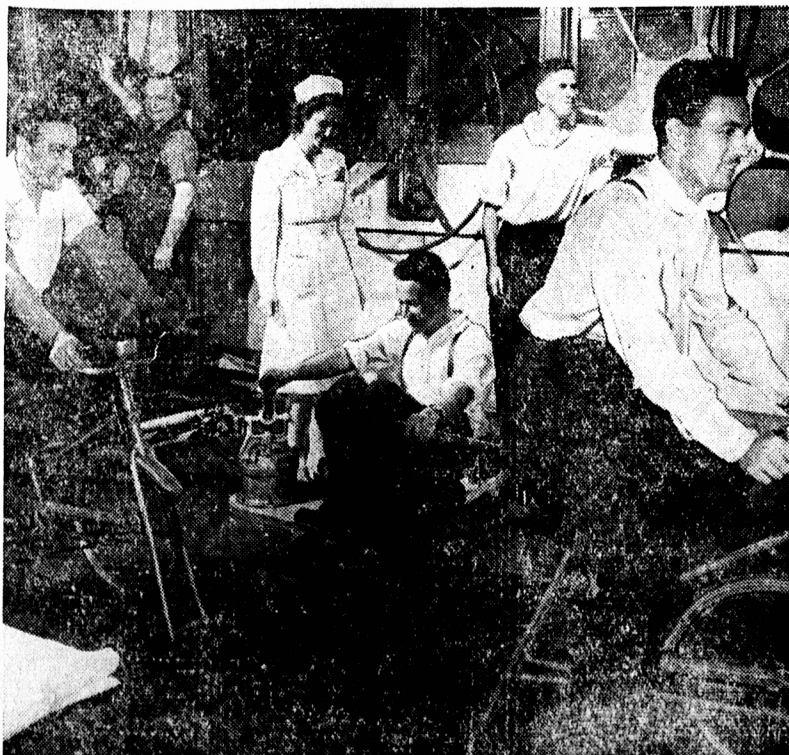
Circular and square boards with rollers tacked under them are excellent for foot exercises. First has a rotary motion, other moves back and forth.



Every day the men in advanced class take a 40-minute course in physical training. Some 20 men are divided into three teams under instructors, taking part in competitive but not rough games. They do physical jerks, bar exercises, leaping gym horse, are soon ready for reinforcement units.



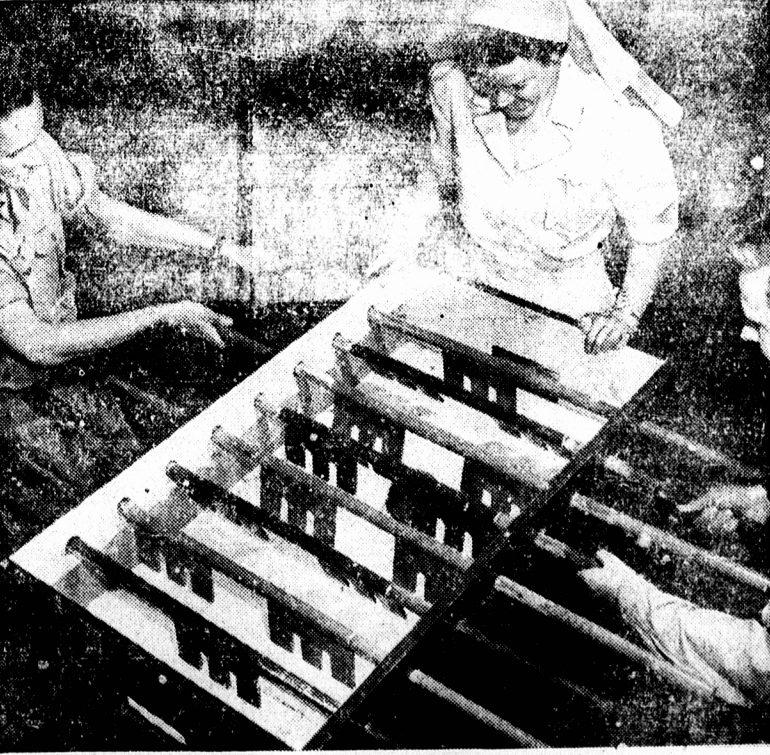
Exercises on bars and pulleys bring back mobility, coordination, counteract stiffness. These forms of exercises aid back injuries, laminectomies.



Back injuries and post-operative laminectomies alternately work on stationary bicycles, mariners' wheels and rowing machines which are part of equipment at the physiotherapy gymnasium of the Christie Street Hospital at Toronto.



This group with curled toes is known as leg class at Oakville centre. They crawl with toes, wiggle them, twist feet to revive strength of muscles.



For wrist and arm injuries, this ingenious hockey game provides fun and a valuable competitive spirit to the men as well as excellent exercise. Game is designed to benefit injured elbows and wrists resulting in atrophy of muscles.

Photos by Ronny Jaoues—National Film Board