

## Dr Victor Wilk



Victor Wilk is a Musculoskeletal Physician and Medical Director of BSSC with over 30 years experience in treating muscle, joint and spinal problems. Initially trained in sports medicine, he then completed a post graduate diploma in Musculoskeletal Medicine and a masters degree in Pain Medicine. Victor was president of the Australasian Faculty of Musculoskeletal Medicine – a training organisation for doctors and continues to give lectures both locally and internationally. He maintains an open minded holistic approach in diagnosing and managing knee, hip, shoulder and spinal pain. Specific therapies used include regenerative injection techniques including dextrose prolotherapy and platelet rich plasma injections for muscle, tendon, joint and painful scar problems, as well as x-ray guided injections and denervation techniques for chronic spinal, hip, knee and shoulder joint pain at Olympic Park Imaging and Holmesglen Hospital.

**Musculoskeletal Medicine** is that branch of medicine dealing with problems related to pain or dysfunction in the muscles, bones and joints of the body. The bones form the skeleton that provides the rigid framework for the shape of the body. The joints allow for movements. The muscles perform and control those movements.

Various problems affect the musculoskeletal system. Most people are familiar with fractures, (cracks or breaks in bones), which usually occur as a result of trauma. Arthritis is a condition in which individual joints become inflamed, which makes them swollen and painful. There are many causes of arthritis; some are well understood, but others are still a mystery.

There are other, much more common aches and pains in various parts of the body, such as the back, the neck, the shoulder, the elbow, the hip and the knee. Although sometimes called "arthritis", these complaints are often not due to joints being inflamed. In many cases the exact source and cause of pain are unknown and cannot be discovered using common tests. The term - **musculoskeletal pain**, is used to describe these conditions. The pain is real, but is not usually evident on X-rays. It means that the problem lies somewhere in the bones, joints, nerves or muscles of the affected part of the body, even though the exact source is not clear. **Musculoskeletal Medicine** is a branch of medicine that deals specifically with these difficult conditions.

Therefore, **Musculoskeletal Medicine** is defined by the sorts of problem that patients suffer, rather than by the types of doctors who treat them. Some people will know about specialties such as Rheumatology, Orthopaedic Surgery, and Rehabilitation Medicine. These are related to and overlap with **Musculoskeletal Medicine**, but each one focuses on particular conditions or special ways of treating them. For example, Rheumatologists have particular skill in treating inflamed joints in conditions like rheumatoid arthritis. Orthopaedic Surgeons are experts in fractures, deformities and other conditions that need surgery for their treatment. Rehabilitation specialists help people to overcome the disabilities and handicaps caused by various disorders.

**Musculoskeletal Medicine** deals with conditions and problems that overlap, but do not fall readily into any of these established specialties. Some specialists in those areas also practice **Musculoskeletal Medicine**. They require only some extra training and knowledge to extend beyond their original specialty. Some general practitioners also practice **Musculoskeletal Medicine**, having completed special diplomas awarded by Universities. This training pays special attention to the common musculoskeletal conditions for which there are no traditional cures. **Musculoskeletal Medicine** draws on the established specialties, and works with them, but focuses on difficult pain problems in particular.

*“Musculoskeletal Medicine treatment commences with a detailed initial assessment leading to a tailored treatment program that may include a broad range of therapies from postural advice, exercises, medications for pain control, hands on manual therapy to X-ray guided spinal injections.”*

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**Medical training:**

Victor Wilk has completed the post-graduate Diploma in Musculoskeletal Medicine and also holds a Master of Pain Medicine degree (Sydney University 2002). He is a founding fellow of the Australasian Faculty of Musculoskeletal Medicine and has been actively involved in teaching other doctors in the area of spinal pain management for over 30 years. These special skills in Musculoskeletal Medicine are not currently recognised by the Australian Medical Council, despite numerous submissions made over the past 20 years. Victor is a recognised specialist in Musculoskeletal Medicine in New Zealand, where Musculoskeletal Medicine ranks equally with Rehabilitation Medicine and Pain Medicine. In the meantime, although he practices in a specialised field, the rebate from the government is less than the General Practitioner rate. If you feel that you would like to support his case for specialization, you can contact the Minister for Health; Mark Butler directly at - [minister.butler@health.gov.au](mailto:minister.butler@health.gov.au).

**Consultation fee levels:**

The nature of Musculoskeletal Medicine consultations is similar in content to that of rheumatologists, Rehabilitation and Pain Physicians. Average fees for an initial consultation with a consultant physician are around \$350-\$400 with a rebate of \$143, and the Federal Government has just introduced a new fee for complex problems taking longer than 45 minutes with a private fee of around \$450, rebate of \$250. Contrast this with the rebate of \$61 for Musculoskeletal Medicine. Unfortunately for patients attending non-vocationally registered doctors the Medicare schedule fee has not risen at all since 1991, (and prior to that only rose 5% since 1985), whilst the costs of providing a quality service continue to rise.

Musculoskeletal Consultation	Usual Fee	Medicare Rebate	80% rebate
Initial consultation	\$345.00	\$61.00	\$276.00
Subsequent (standard)	\$123.00	\$21.00	\$98.40
Subsequent Long (20-45 mins)	\$195.00	\$38.00	\$156.00
Prolonged (more than 50 mins)	\$395.00	\$61.00	\$304.00

For Pensioners, Veterans Affairs and Health Care Card Holders, we do generally offer a 20% discounted fee, but for the above reasons, do not bulk-bill patients. The good news is the new Medicare Plus Package gives rebates of up to 80% of the out of pocket expenses once you have reached the threshold of \$2000 in any calendar year. Pensioners who cannot afford these private fees are encouraged to attend their local public hospital outpatient services where treatment is fully funded by the government. Accounts may be taken to Medicare and rebates claimed. If you have any queries regarding these billing arrangements please discuss with your doctor at the time of your consultation.

As from Nov 1<sup>st</sup> 2009 Medicare is no longer paying rebates for joint injections. Previously a separate item number 50124 was charged for injections into joints such as the knee – this will now be incorporated in the consultation fee – usually an extra \$60 for a simple single joint injection. More complex spinal injections attract a higher fee ( epidurals , facet injections, etc, ) – with extra rebates available under Medicare.

There will be a small charge for telephone prescriptions and the completion of insurance forms. Payment is expected at the time of consultation. We currently accept the fees paid by WorkCover and TAC. For any procedures done with Dr Victor Wilk we kindly request payment **within 30 days of the invoice date**. To help us keep our administrative costs down, a late fee of \$25.00 or 10% of the outstanding balance (whichever is greater) may apply.

***We kindly request payment on day of consultation. To help us keep our administrative costs down, a late fee of \$25.00 or 10% of the outstanding balance (whichever is greater) may apply.***

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