

# Go Ortho, Grow Ortho – Growing Our Own Orthopaedic Nurses

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## Introduction

The orthopaedic wards at North Shore Hospital faced critical nursing staff shortages in 2008. As the staffing crisis deepened and recruitment strategies were not attracting candidates, it was identified that many nurses consider orthopaedics to be too specialised to branch into later in their career.

These factors led to the creation of a unique programme that develops and supports orthopaedic learning and the acquisition of orthopaedic nursing knowledge for nurses who are experienced in other specialties.

The programme can be taught at short notice when new staff are employed, as the key speakers are the Orthopaedic Nurse Educator, company representatives, the Outreach Nurse from ICU and the orthotist.

## Objectives

- To attract a new group of applicants to orthopaedic nursing
- To develop and increase our workforce



“The New to Orthopaedics course was extremely helpful to me. With coming back to acute practice after so many years away, it filled in gaps of knowledge and taught me a lot about orthopaedics. Practice has changed a lot in 18 years since I began nursing and I appreciated the confidence the course gave me.” Lesley (new to orthopaedics nurse)

## Acknowledgements

Thanks to all the preceptors for their time and patience.  
Thanks to the Charge Nurses for their support of the programme



“The New to Orthopaedic course is really helping me in my practice. I got more good experience, knowledge and new skills from this course than from 5 years previous experience. I am also happy to say that getting opportunities to do new procedures helped improve my confidence in my daily practice”. Biji (new to orthopaedics nurse)

## Methods

Key orthopaedic nursing knowledge was identified to inform what the “New to Orthopaedics Programme” is to focus on. The programme entails four weeks of the theoretical and practical aspects of Orthopaedic Nursing.

Week 1 and 2

- Dedicated orientation to key areas of the orthopaedic pathway including time with the physiotherapist, pain team, ICU Outreach team, visiting the orthopaedic outpatient clinic and following a patient through theatre.
- Attend two day Orthopaedic Workshop.

Week 3 and 4

- The nurse works in a supernumerary capacity on the ward supported by the Nurse Educator, Charge Nurses and dedicated preceptor
- Nurse completes the medication test if new to WDHB

This programme was built into our recruitment advertising promoting

“Go Ortho, Grow Ortho”

## Results

Nine nurses have been through the programme since it commenced in June 2008 (as at Nov 2008). Of these, seven were our new staff and two others were from the ortho-geriatric ward.

## Conclusion

The orthopaedic wards have attracted a different type of nurse with this innovative educational support, one who is experienced but previously hesitant to branch out into the specialty of orthopaedic nursing.

