



May is Older Americans Month



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1400 Pike Street, Marietta OH
1-800-331-2644
www.buckeyehills.org

Caregiving in
The Comfort of Home[®]
Caregiver Series

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Ways you can celebrate!

- Invest time with people to build new relationships and discover deeper connections with your family, friends, colleagues, or neighbors.
- Stay engaged in your community by giving back through volunteering, working, teaching, or mentoring.
- Invite more connection into your life by finding a new passion, joining a social club, taking a class, or trying new activities in your community.

MAY 2024

Caregiving in
The Comfort of Home[®]

Caregiver Assistance News

“CARING FOR YOU... CARING FOR OTHERS”

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Range of Motion Exercises

Physical and occupational therapies are part of the process of relearning how to function after an injury, illness, or period of inactivity. If muscles are not used, they shorten and tighten, making joint motion painful. For the person in your care, these therapies are key to achieving as much functional independence as possible. Although you may not be asked to assist with these exercises, it is useful for you to know how they help.

A *physical therapist* treats a person to relieve pain, build up and restore muscle function, and maintain the best possible performance. The therapist does this by using active and passive exercises, massage, heat, water, and electricity. Broadly speaking, a physical therapist:

- Sets the goals of treatment with patient and family.
- Shows how to use special equipment.
- Instructs in routine daily functions.
- Teaches safe ways to move and sets up an exercise program.

Occupational Therapy

Occupational therapy is designed to help people regain and build skills that are important for functioning on their own. Occupational therapy is designed to help people regain and build skills that are important for functioning on their own. The *occupational therapist* will help the person evaluate levels of function and:

- Tests a person's strength, range of motion, endurance (the ability to continue an activity or effort), and dexterity (skill in using hands) to do everyday tasks that were done easily before an illness or injury.
- Designs a program that ensures the greatest possible independence.
- Provides training to relearn everyday *activities of daily living* like eating, dressing, toileting, and bathing.
- Decides whether special equipment is needed, such as wheelchairs, feeding devices, transfer equipment, hand and skin devices.



SAFETY TIPS— Range of Motion Exercises (ROM)

When helping a person with any activity, first give verbal instruction, then use visual gestures and finally, touch. Here are some things to do when you are asked to help the person in your care exercise at home:

- ➔ Communicate what you are doing.
- ➔ Use the flat palms of both hands, not the fingertips, to hold a body part.
- ➔ Take each movement only as far as the joint will go into a comfortable stretch. (Mild discomfort is okay, but it should go away quickly.)
- ➔ Do each exercise 3 to 5 times.
- ➔ Use slow, steady movements to help relax muscles and increase joint range.
- ➔ If joints are swollen and painful, exercise very gently.

Source: *The Comfort of Home: A Complete Guide for Caregivers*

Arthritis

Arthritis is a common chronic health problem, causing pain, loss of movement, and sometimes swelling.

Osteoarthritis is the “wear and tear” type, in which the slippery cartilage that covers the ends of bones in a joint wears out, causing pain and loss of movement as bone begins to rub against bone. It is the most common form of arthritis.

Rheumatoid arthritis is an *autoimmune disease*, in which the person's body begins to attack its own joints, causing inflammation and pain. It affects mostly women.

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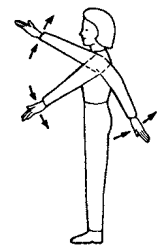
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Range-of-Motion (ROM) Exercises

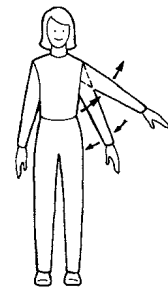
Use range-of-motion exercises to relieve pain, maintain normal body alignment, help prevent skin swelling and breakdown, and promote bone formation. A ROM exercise program

is ideally started *before* deformities develop. The following information is provided for your general knowledge. It IS NOT a substitute for training with professional therapists.

Joints Used in ROM



▲ shoulder



▲ hip



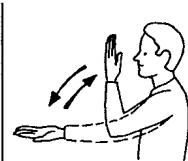
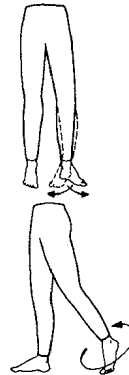
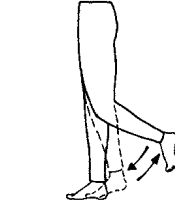
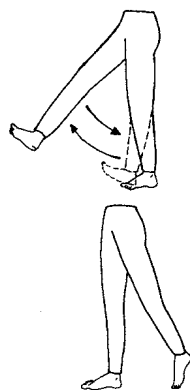
▲ hands



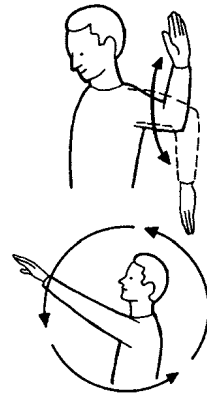
▲ feet, ankle, toe



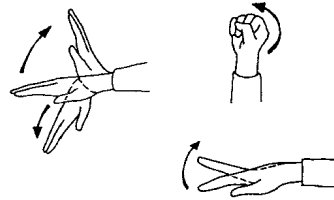
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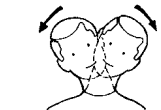
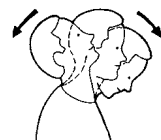
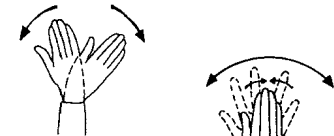
▲ elbows



▲ shoulders



▲ finger/thumb



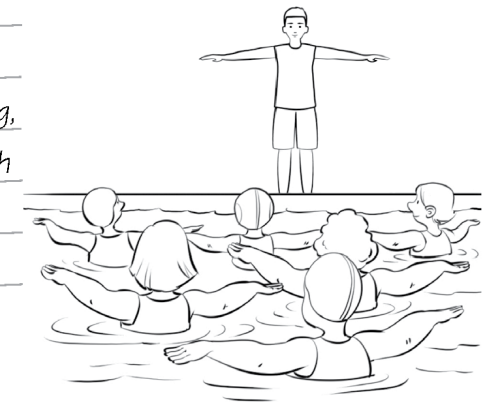
▲ neck

Taking Care of Yourself— Water-Based Exercises

The Arthritis Foundation Aquatic Program (AFAP) is a community-based, group program that uses a variety of water-based exercises to increase physical activity among adults with arthritis. AFAP is offered in some YMCAs and by other community organizations. Participants do not need to know how to swim to participate in AFAP. Goals are: improved range of motion, muscle strengthening, endurance, day to day function and self-confidence. Each class has balance and coordination activities. The class also has relaxation and breathing activities.

Source: Arthritis Physical Activity Programs | CDC

<https://www.cdc.gov/arthritis/interventions/physical-activity.html>



Inspiration

Blessed are the flexible, for they shall not be bent out of shape.

Live Life Laughing!

I want to thank you Lord, for being close to me so far this day. With your help I haven't been impatient, lost my temper, been grumpy, judgmental, or envious of anyone. BUT I will be getting out of bed in a minute, and I think I will need your help then! Amen



Memory Care - New Skills

As time goes by, it may be necessary for you to learn new skills, such as how to use adaptive devices such as shower chairs and hand-under-hand-assistance for helping the person in your care in the later stages. Training by an occupational or physical therapist will help you to be more competent and confident and will result in less stress for you and the person in your care.