

Enhancing Resident Mobility

for improved function and wellbeing



Why is enhancing residents' mobility important?

Enhancing and maintaining residents' mobility is an important part of preserving their function and their physical and psychological wellbeing. By making mobility part of their daily care, nursing homes staff can improve residents' quality of life, range of motion, transferring and mobility. Working toward enhanced mobility also helps eliminate physical restraints and reduces the risks of falls.

Increased mobility benefits...

Residents

- Strengthened muscles and bones, reducing risk of fractures and falls
- Improved heart and lung function
- Better sleep
- Improved appetite, which helps maintain a healthy weight
- Reduced risks of complications associated with immobility, like muscle wasting
- Heightened alertness and better moods
- Increased movement while lying in bed or sitting, reducing risks for pressure ulcers
- Safer transfers
- Steadier when standing or walking
- More independence during activities of daily living, like dressing, eating, toileting, etc.
- Decreased social isolation

Nursing home staff

- Meaningful relationships with residents through resident independence and empowerment
- Decreased time providing direct assistance during personal care, bed positioning and transportation to and from activities

Nursing homes

- Enhanced reputation within the community
- Nursing homes promote a culture of safety
- Demonstrated consistency with culture change and person-centered care
- Improved quality measures related to falls, physical restraints, pressure ulcers or weight loss
- Reduced costs associated with treating the consequences of immobility, like pressure ulcers, contractures, constipation and incontinence

What activities can help increase residents' mobility?

- Seated volleyball – Set up a net and let residents, seated in chairs or wheelchairs, play volleyball with a beach ball or a balloon. This can also be played without a net and/or with multiple balls or balloons.
- Let residents kick or hit beach balls or balloons to pass them around the room to one another.
- Stretching or arm/leg lift exercises – Use elastic bands for resistance.
- Playing catch – Bring in dogs that will retrieve thrown balls.
- Walking – Playing rhythmic music helps with balance. Walk beside any residents who need support.
- Dance lessons – Residents can teach staff how to dance. They feel useful and staff can learn something new! Also, dancing allows staff to hold onto residents to support their balance.
- Ask residents for ideas for activities they would enjoy.

Source: Advancing Excellence in America's Nursing Homes, Increase Resident Mobility: Leadership Fact Sheet, 2012