



IMPORTANCE OF MOVEMENT

The body is designed to move. Lack of movement or mobility can lead to decreased function in many systems of the body. This can then lead to an array of problems from constipation, poor circulation and respiratory problems to osteoporosis and joint contractures.

Range of Motion or "ROM," refers to the movement of a joint through its complete available range. It can be measured (in degrees from 0 – 180) with a special tool called a goniometer.

Many people with disabilities lose range of motion at some of their body joints. Loss of range is usually caused by a variety of factors including:

- spasticity or abnormal tone
- loss of ability to move actively or voluntarily
- sitting or lying in the same position for long periods of time
- poor posture in sitting
- pain or discomfort from moving
- joint deterioration or arthritis

It is important to maintain a **functional** range of movement for each individual. **Functional** refers to a range that allows the person to carry out (or be assisted to carry out) their necessary daily activities such as self-care (eating, dressing, bathing and hygiene), work activities and leisure activities.

Sometimes a loss of range of motion does not appear to interfere with any of an individual's activities or cause any discomfort. If this is the case it may not be a problem for this individual. At other times loss of range may cause difficulties with a variety of important daily activities to the point where it even prohibits sitting or is causing significant discomfort, pressure sores or even respiratory problems.

Loss of range at a joint can, over time, lead to a **contracture** or tightening of the tissues around the joint. This may cause a permanent change or **deformity** in the body's musculo-skeletal system.

Many people find stretching and exercise to be pleasant and positive – remember the body is meant to move. Other people, for various reasons, find movement of their limbs to be painful and unpleasant.

All these factors are important in planning and implementing an individual **Movement Program**. Some movement programs may consist of specific exercises or stretches which must be taught by a therapist, while others may consist of more general suggestions such as walking, swimming and position changes.

We believe that movement is **vital** to keep body systems operating smoothly and to maintain optimum health and quality of life!

Please speak to your consulting therapist for assistance in setting up an individual movement program.

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