

MOVEMENT

Suggestions for Moving a Part of the Body of a Person with Cognitive Impairment

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1. Keep in mind that moving a body part can be difficult, painful, or uncomfortable for a person with cognitive impairment because of age, brain impairment, weakness, or rigidity, particularly in the joints.
2. **Prepare** this person both physically and emotionally, before moving a part of their body. They may not be able to easily transition from being still to moving a part of their body.
3. Remember discomfort with movement may be **unpredictable**. Each part of this person's body may have a different level of sensitivity and discomfort, and may change from one moment to next.
4. **Watch** this person's face and body constantly, and **listen** to what they say to discern how sensitive or uncomfortable a body part is with movement at this time.
5. Read and use suggestions from the handout "Touch: Suggestions for Touching a Person with Cognitive Impairment" by S Weaverdyck, before touching this person.
6. **Go slowly** enough to allow this person time to prepare to move, and to respond to what you say.
7. Encourage this person to **move the body part on their own**. This will likely be most comfortable.
8. **Ask them to move** the body part, before touching this person. For example, say "Please lift your arm."
9. **Ask them for permission** to move a body part, if this person cannot move it. For example, say "May I lift your arm?" or "May I help you?"
10. **Add a nonverbal gesture** with your verbal request. For example, point to the body part or to your own body part. Whether or not this person can understand or speak, a nonverbal gesture can make it easier for them to focus on the body part.
11. To **draw this person's attention** to a body part, use the palm of your hand to gently but firmly touch or stroke the body part to be moved.
12. If the body part is stiff or uncomfortable, gently but firmly with the palm of your hand, **stroke the body part** and joint to be moved before it is moved. Begin away from the joint or painful area, and stroke toward the joint and painful area.
13. Use **warm water or warm, damp washcloths** draped over the body part and joint.
14. Move a body part **as little as possible** and only as much as in necessary.
15. Minimize the number of starts and stops during the movement. Make the movement as smooth and as uninterrupted as possible.
16. **Tell this person** before touching and before actually moving the body part, so they can prepare emotionally and reduce the physical discomfort.
17. **Maintain eye contact** with this person throughout the movement. Direct their gaze to the movement when necessary, or talk about something else to distract them.
18. Minimize the number of times your hand leaves and returns to the body part, since this person may have difficulty adjusting to the initiation of your touch.
19. **Use the palm of your hand** rather than fingers to touch, to reduce the number of contact points.
20. **Cradle the joint** or body part you are moving by resting it on your arm, rather than simply lifting it with your hand.