

# Passive movements

Lower limbs



**Information for patients**  
Therapy Services



**PROUD TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE**

SHEFFIELD TEACHING HOSPITALS NHS FOUNDATION TRUST



## General information

Passive movements are exercises that we recommend to people who cannot move their legs themselves. This is because, when legs become paralysed, the joints and muscles may become stiff and fixed into one position through lack of movement.

### Why is it important to do these exercises?

By putting your joints through a range of movements regularly you will:

- Prevent / reduce stiffness and painful joints.
- Increase circulation and decrease swelling.
- Ensure you keep a useful range of movement to allow you to get dressed, sit correctly in your wheelchair and perform other functional activities.

### How long will it take me to do the exercises?

The exercises described in this leaflet do not take long to do and can easily be fitted into your day at a time to suit you. You should do them as well as any other exercises that your physiotherapist has given you.

### How often should I do these exercises?

You should aim to go through the full range of exercises about 5 to 10 times each, 2 or 3 times a week. The movements should be slow and rhythmical but be careful not to over-stretch.

These exercises will help to keep a range of useful movement, but don't forget; standing, lying prone (on your stomach) and even the daily movement that your limbs are put through as you get dressed will help too.

## **Is there a risk in doing these exercises?**

Be careful not to over-stretch when doing these exercises as it may cause damage or injury to joints or muscles.

## **What should I do if I think muscles have been over-stretched?**

If you think that you have over-stretched, then stop the exercises and seek advice from your GP or physiotherapist.

## Hip and knee movements

Support the leg by holding it under the knee and the heel, keeping the opposite leg flat on the bed.

**1.** Move the knee up towards the chest, allowing the leg to bend and then back down towards the bed.



**2.** With the hip and knee bent, keep the foot flat on the bed and move the knee:

**a)** outwards



**b)** inwards



**3.** Support the leg, so that both the hip and knee are at 90 degrees (right angle), then move the heel:

**a)** towards you



**b)** away from you



**4.** Using the same position as in number **3**, straighten the knee.



## Ankle movements

**Keeping the knee as straight as possible.**

**1.** Support the heel with one hand so that your arm rests against the bottom of the person's foot. Press your arm against the bottom of their foot bending it towards the leg, stretching the calf.



**2.** With one hand holding the ankle still, grasp the foot below the toes and move the upper part of the foot in a circular movement.



**3.** With the person's leg flat, hold the ankle and curl and straighten the toes.



**Individual comments:**

If you have any questions or concerns please contact us on:

**0114 271 5680** or **0114 271 5674**



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