

Immobility and Musculoskeletal Pain



- 45-80% of nursing home residents have unrecognized, untreated pain
- 68% require extensive help with mobility
- Immobility pain may look like restlessness, leaning and calling out

Musculoskeletal (MSK) disorders, such as [degenerative spine](#) and arthritic conditions, are the most common source of chronic pain. MSK pain is worsened by immobility. Muscles and ligaments shorten from lack of use, increasing pressure on inflamed joints, and restricting the blood supply. The discs of the lower back have three times more load on them while sitting versus standing.

The team at CapitalCare Kipnes Centre for Veterans collaborated to decrease the discomfort of immobility. The physiotherapist identified individual interventions. Family caregivers and Health Care Aides assisted with:

- Change of position to reduce pressure on the spine
- A walk to move the whole body
- Slow, gentle stretching and massage to release contracted muscles and ligaments

Chris, pictured above, said, “Doing exercises with Mom is a great way to connect with her, and help her reconnect with something that was a source of pleasure throughout her life.” (Watch Chris’s story: [The Power of Movement](#)).

Looking for more resources? Check out:

- GeriatricPain.org: [Fast Facts: Exercise](#); [Dementia-Inclusive Choices for Exercise](#)
- [Managing Chronic Pain in Older People](#)
- [Osteoarthritis: Exercising with Arthritis](#)