

# Why moving more is important for your older relative

Staying active, connected and doing things that personally matter can all have positive benefits for your older relative



## What's the issue?

You probably know that keeping active everyday plays a big part in our wellbeing. But you might not know that this holds true for all ages, including the oldest or most frail of us. In fact, the Chief Medical Officer's guidelines for older people state that:

**'for those who are limited by disease or impairment, there is value in even small increases in activity, which can also help to slow or prevent further decline'**.

Sometimes, within hospitals and care settings and even in our own homes, older people can get out of the habit of moving. Very often we want to show love and respect for older people by assisting them with day to day tasks. This kindness could potentially have negative effects it encourages the person to limit their activity and movement. It also prevents people from staying independent (even in small ways), doing what matters to them, and lowers quality of life. Prolonged inactivity leads to poor health such as frailty, falls and weaker bone strength. It can also contribute to poorer quality of life, depression and loneliness.

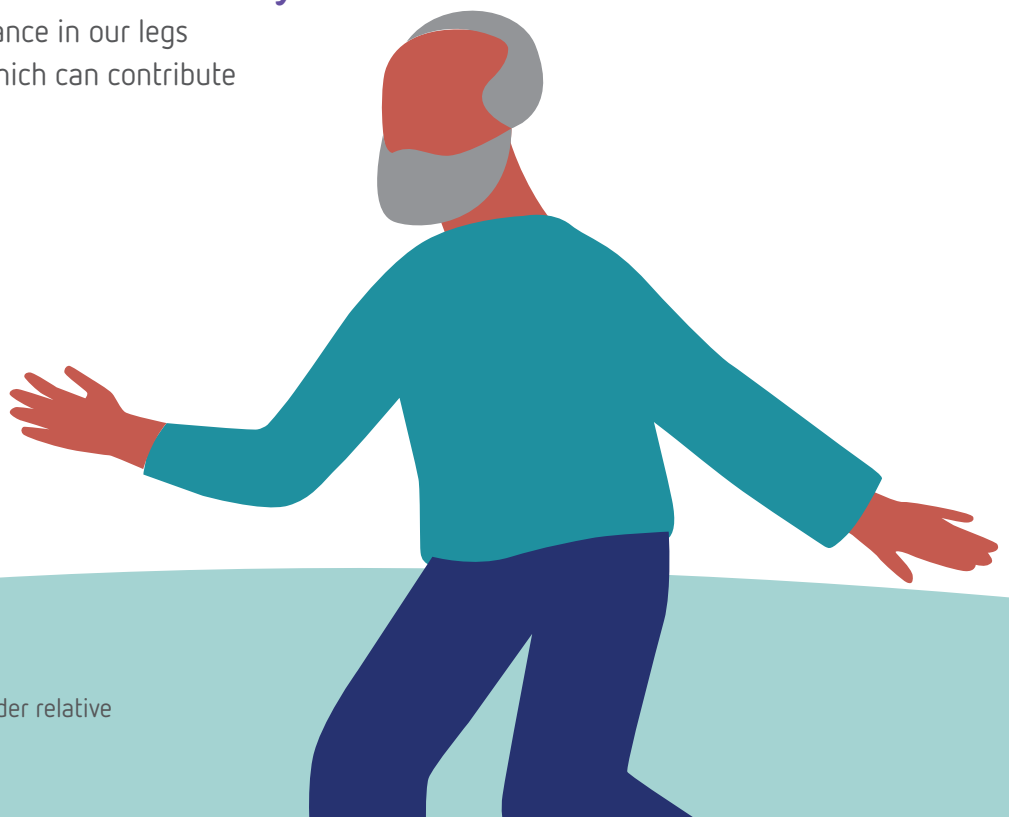
## But what about the risks?

Families sometimes worry that it might be risky for their older relative to start moving more and it might be better if they sit still. However, research shows that it is harmful to sit still for long periods of time.

## What about falls?

Did you know that falls are not an inevitable part of growing older? The European Review of Ageing and Physical Activity tells us **'...what is often understood as an ageing process is to a great extent the result of inactivity'**

We often lose strength and balance in our legs when we become less active, which can contribute to having a fall.



## What can you do?

It's important to encourage your relative to keep active throughout the day. These can range from dusting their room, carrying shopping, or hanging out the washing. We can also help our relatives build their strength by encouraging them to increase the number of times they stand up and sit down during the day or to stand for a few seconds more when transferring between wheelchair and chair. This all helps older people to keep safely mobile.

Perhaps you could encourage your relative to do as much as they can for themselves, even when this takes more time? How about finding ways to walk, stretch, dance or move together when you visit?

**'Physical inactivity ... it's especially bad for people with long term health conditions. The solution is simple, just a little more movement every day'**

**Moving Medicine**

**'I often find it hard to have the energy to move from my chair. I'm comfortable there. However, my daughter insists that we go out for coffee and when we do, I always think 'isn't it lovely to get out?'**

**Sheila Aged 89**

# What if my relative has dementia?

Like everyone else, keeping active when living with dementia brings many benefits, It:

- helps maintain independence for longer
- improves the ability to dress, clean and perform other daily activities
- may improve memory and slow down mental decline
- improves sleep
- reduces the risk of falls by improving strength and balance
- improves confidence, self-esteem and mood.

Alzheimer's Society

## For more information

Visit:

**Stay Active wherever you are -**  
Strength and balance movements  
to build into your day:  
Chartered Society of  
Physiotherapists



SCAN ME

**Keeping Active and Involved:** Alzheimer  
Scotland



SCAN ME

**NHS Inform video** where people  
talk about how taking part in  
movement classes helped their  
confidence



SCAN ME

**LifeCurve app** to build  
personalised support  
as you age



SCAN ME

**'Holding back and giving gran the time to do things herself is difficult sometimes, but it helps her to feel more confident and independent.'**

**Catrina**



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