



# Physiotherapy makes you **Stronger** in so many ways



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## About Physiotherapy

benefits of physiotherapy

## You're never too old to become stronger and more independent - By Gwen Rose

Mrs. B. contacted me to teach her husband exercises to enable him to become stronger, avoid falls and prevent deterioration in his functional independence. Mr. B. has Parkinson's disease and the early stages of Alzheimer's disease.

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Although Mrs. B's main concerns were her husband's conditions, she soon revealed that she herself suffers from hip osteoarthritis and osteoporosis. After I explained how exercises would help her control the pain and limitations caused by her hip osteoarthritis, as well as slow bone density loss, she agreed to an exercise program as well.

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Mr. and Mrs. B are both in their nineties and, until recently, led active lifestyles. They are both golfers. Mrs. B was hoping to continue to play the occasional game. Both wanted to remain as independent as possible in their day-to-day activities.

## Get Involved

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When considering their ability to remain independent, I addressed all components of functional fitness: range of motion, muscle strength, cardiovascular fitness and balance.

Initially, the exercises used light resistance cables on the Resistance Chair. Few repetitions were recommended and only a few exercises were taught. Intuitively, Mr. B. started to move the cables on his own. I explained that any movement with the cables would strengthen muscles and if the exercises continued at a pace that caused slight shortness of breath, they would also improve cardiovascular fitness: hearts, lungs and circulatory systems.

I demonstrated a couple of exercises that focused on their particular goals. Mr. B was shown large rotational trunk movements for his Parkinson's disease which he could do easily, sitting on the side of the chair using the cables. Mrs. B was shown exercises to help strengthen her hip in a safe, seated position as well as using the health step. They were both shown tandem standing exercises to improve their balance. To promote health literacy as well as motivation, I explained how each of the exercises would help them reach their health and fitness goals.

I followed up the next day to get feedback while the initial effects were still fresh in their minds and to address any concerns they might have. Mrs. B. stated that she wasn't feeling well after exercising and thus felt she shouldn't do any more. I advised her to check with her doctor. However, we discussed possible contributing factors such as being deconditioned, failing to eat something light before and after exercising, and drinking insufficient water. I reinforced that she should start very slowly, and gradually increase the number of different exercises and repetitions of each exercise.

With a baby-steps approach, guidance and motivation, Mr. and Mrs. B have continued with their exercise programs. To date, they are independent in their own care and activities of daily living while remaining in the comfort of their long-time home.

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