

Preventing Muscle Shortening

Why do muscles shorten?

Muscles get short because they do not move and get stretched.

We usually stretch our muscles every day without even realising it. We stretch them when we are walking and sitting, and moving around. This movement keeps our muscles at a good length.

If a child with a disability has difficulty moving around, or tightness in his muscles make it easier to stay in one position then their muscles, then his muscles will get shorter and shorter, and it will get more difficult for him to move around or hold himself or herself in positions like sitting or standing.

How do I prevent muscles from shortening?

There are three ways of preventing muscles from shortening – it's important to do all three with your child.

1. Good positions – sitting, lying, standing
2. Stretching muscles
3. Exercising muscles



Range of Motion Exercises

What are they?

They are a series of movements that the person with a physical disability can do to exercise their body.

Why do them?

- Because of a person with a physical disability may not be able to move all parts of their body on their own.
- Because if people don't move all parts of their body their limbs will stiffen, tighten, contractures will form.

Are these special exercises?

- No, not really. They are the way that the parts of the body would normally move if the person didn't have a physical disability.

Who should do them?

- A family member, after being trained by the CBR Field Worker. The CBR Field Worker will do them on their visiting days.

How should they do them?

- **GENTLY**
- **SLOWLY**
- **WITH NO PAIN**
- **And HAVING FUN!**

How often and for how long?

- Everyday, for about 30 minutes.

