



Cerebral Palsy Integrated Pathway Scotland

The importance of Postural Management

The information below is designed to summarise key orthopaedic information to remember as your child grows. It is not meant to be an exclusive list. Please do not hesitate to ask for further information from your child's Physiotherapist/Orthopaedic team.

Maintaining flexibility at the hip, knee and ankle is very important as your child is growing. Any tightness or shortening of muscles will have an impact on their comfort, care and positioning.

Identifying early signs of muscle shortening is important to make sure the right management is put in place at an early stage to prevent problems developing/progressing.

The pictures below show what movement is needed at the **hip** to ensure comfortable sitting, at the **knee** to allow standing transfers/ standing frames and at the **ankle** for feet to be flat on foot rests.



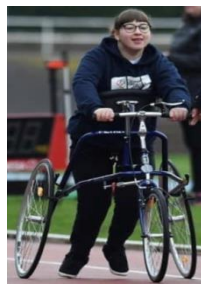
The term **POSTURAL MANAGEMENT** is often used for children and young people with limited independent movement. The purpose of POSTURAL MANAGEMENT is to ensure your child maintains flexibility as they are growing to help significantly decrease the chance of muscle tightness impacting on their functional abilities comfort, care and positioning.

Postural management helps focus on the importance of several key points:

- Sitting with a level pelvis
- Being active in equipment
- Awareness of posture, especially symmetry, when at rest- this is a time when your child is most at risk!
- Use of orthotics to maintain range and preserve foot posture/ body shape
- Night-time positioning equipment - when to introduce/ risk factors
- Optimising time for standing – choosing when, where and for how long

Muscles adapt to the position they are most in. Activities that promote movement, strengthening, fitness and 'positions of stretch' (spending time using equipment or in positions such as sitting with legs as straight as possible out in front, lying on tummy etc) are all important to help your child maintain flexibility of their joints and muscles.

Short muscles stay short if left in that position. Muscles that move stay longer and more flexible.



Regular use of equipment – standing frames, specialist seating and sleep systems can all help ensure good positioning for muscle stretching as well as accessing a variety of activities



Finding a time or activity that can include these is the best way to ensure they are done regularly. Your child's physiotherapist would be happy to help suggest options for similar exercises/activities.

Depending on the age and ability of your child, they may need help using equipment or with the activities. You may also need assistance with transferring/positioning/using equipment. This may be a 2nd person to help you or using specialist equipment such as a hoist/standing aide.

If your child has splints, they will also need to wear these as much as possible. A good rule of thumb is ***"Splints should be on within an hour of getting up and come off an hour before going to bed."*** This may be different for some children and you should discuss any questions with your child's physiotherapist, Orthotist or Orthopaedic team.

This sheet is designed to summarise important information. It does not replace or supersede any therapy programme you may have been given. If in doubt – PLEASE ASK!

Thanks to all the children, young people and families who consented to use of their pictures.