

# 7 MINUTE LEARNING

01

## Introduction

A contracture is a change to a person's ability to move their joints and limbs freely. Abnormal shortening of muscle tissue leads to the muscle being highly resistant to stretching. This can lead to permanent disability. It can be caused by fibrosis of the tissues supporting the muscle or the joint, or by disorders of the muscle fibres. A recent Dorset Safeguarding Adults Review\* highlighted that contractures were one of the recommended areas of learning.

An increased awareness and understanding is needed around contractures and how to prevent them.

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## What to do next

### Prevention is key!

Encourage movement and participation in ADL's, even simple steps like participating in their own personal care can help. Seek professional involvement from: Nursing, Wheelchair Services, Physiotherapists, OT's.

06

## Learning:

### Prevention of contractures

- Range of motion exercises- Physiotherapy
- Seating position- feet and legs
- Bed/sleeping position
- Splinting- hand and feet

### Restoration

- Can take up to a year
- Painful and difficult

## Learning:

02

## Why do contractures develop?

- When people do not move or are not encouraged to move often enough
- When people remain stationary in their chair or bed for long periods
- When someone is unable to move on their own (following a stroke, injury, surgery or due to dementia)
- Poor positioning or support in their bed or chair
- Improper support and positioning of joints affected by arthritis or injury
- Inadequate exercising of patients with paralysis

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## Learning: what does a contracture look like?



## Learning about contractures

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## Learning:

### Ways Contractures affects the Provider

Loss of reputation  
Risk of litigation  
Difficulty Transferring  
Staff morale  
Difficulty moving and handling  
Individuals have more intensive care needs

## Learning: Impact of contractures on the individual

Increased pain  
Impaired motor function  
Reduced mobility  
Reduced range of movement  
Loss of function for Activities of Daily Living (ADL's )  
Social participation/ isolation  
Quality of Life is affected  
Pressure sores  
Hygiene and Infections