

SETTING

Hospital

CARER

Your elderly mother has been an inpatient at the local hospital for the past three weeks. She was admitted with vomiting and diarrhoea; her gastro-intestinal problems have now resolved, and she will be discharged as soon as she is stronger. This illness has left her very weak and you are concerned that she is not able to walk without help.

TASK

- Find out how your mother can strengthen the muscles in her legs.
- When asked, find out if she should use any special equipment or shoes.
- After listening to the physiotherapist's explanation, express your concern that she may not be able to cope with a lot of activity because of her age and her weakness.

SETTING

Hospital

PHYSIO

You are speaking to the adult son/daughter of an elderly woman who was referred to you. The patient has general muscle weakness and debilitation following three weeks of bed rest for gastro-intestinal problems.

Her medical problems have resolved and the son/daughter is anxious to help her regain her strength prior to discharge.

TASK

- Explain your management to the son/daughter (e.g., gentle exercises, getting the patient to move around more and more each day).
- Describe some specific leg strengthening exercises that would be suitable for this patient (stretches, flexion).
- Find out what further information is needed.
- Ask that appropriate shoes for her to wear for ambulation are brought in to the hospital.
- Advise on other appropriate activities (e.g., aqua aerobics, walking, swimming), and then check to see how the carer feels about your suggestions.
- Reassure the son/daughter.