

# Patty's PT Tips

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## What Are the Missing Links?

### What to look for:

Decreased Range of Motion or Contracture of Joint tissues, muscle, tendon and ligaments

- Do you feel a “hard stop” or a “spongy” feeling when trying to move a joint?
- Can you passively make a joint move farther or can you use a tool to assist the movement?
- Can you use your own muscle strength to make the joint move?
- How do the right and left sides compare?

### How to begin strengthening:

**Assist** the movement with a strap, stick or the other side of the body. Concentrate on the muscles that may help you move along with the use of the tool.

If you have mobility use all the muscle activity you have available to create the movement. This is where a PT, OT or exercise specialist can help you figure out the right exercises. The instruction can help you coordinate the right movements.

**Isokinetic** exercise is a way to begin a strengthening program where you can use your own muscles to “push through” the motion. It can be done anywhere/anytime. No equipment needed except your own body. Think of all your muscles working like strong rubber bands as you pull and push through a motion.

The more difficult phase is to use resistance bands to load the effort in a way that is gentle to the joints.

**Isotonic** exercise is when you actually use weights. It can be a tomato paste can to a dumbbell.

Using your own body weight is another form of this type of exercise: Think wheelchair pushups, wall pushups, or sit to stand. The nervous system responds well to this type of effort because it pulls together muscular effort that the brain is familiar with.

**Quality not quantity is super important** but you have to add quantity to get stronger.

**Today's Practice:** Isokinetic Exercise for the upper extremities-with and without bands

- Scapular/neck stabilization-shoulders up, down, forward and back with neck held stable
- Hand gripping and opening. Wrist circles
- Elbow flexion/extension. Palms up/palms down
- Shoulder rotational movements-many, many options because the joint allows for many ranges of motion. Play with these and see where your limitations are.

Ask for professional help! No one can know everything that is possible or correct. Professionals can help you figure out ways to figure out ways to overcome your losses or make the most of what you have available. Ask LOTS of questions. Figure out what your functional goals are ahead of time. It helps the therapist design the best recommendations.

**Special Note: Participate in the MSA Tai Chi classes either on line or in person at the MSA office. Check the calendar on every other Tuesdays at 1:30. Great stuff!**

Box Breathing to complete your exercise program or when pain or fatigue gets a grip on you.