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Caring for Geriatric Patients by [Carrie Kiekhaefer](#)

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Sometimes it's the little things that can make all the difference. Often overlooked by nurses, but proper positioning in bed is an easy way to make a patient feel better. Better positioning leads to less pain and our patients happiness. With just a little bit of time and care we can assure our patients are comfortable.

Combined with the proper amount of analgesics, positioning your patient correctly can mean far less pain overall for anyone, especially elderly patients. Elderly patients simply require a gentle and careful hand due to weakened bones and fragile skin. Let's go over the things you can do to properly position your patients in bed.

The first thing you need to do is assess the state of the bedding. Is the sheet smooth and unwrinkled? Wrinkled sheets can be very uncomfortable especially someone who has a hip fracture. To smooth it out just remember that you don't always have to roll the patient over. Simply push down on the mattress and pull the sheet towards you. Most of the time this can save you a lot of time and keep your patient happy. If the sheets need to be changed, always remember to have the replacement linens ready to go. You don't want to keep your patient uncomfortable or out of bed longer than needed.

If it is necessary to move them make sure you never pull their arm to get them up or roll them on their side. Always use the flat part of your hand against their hip, upper thigh, or mid-back between the scapulae to move them. The next thing you should look at is body position.

Look at the position of your patient's hip in relation to the bed. The ideal position for the hips is just below where the bed bends. In this position, they will have better lung and abdominal excursion. After that, check to make sure the hips and shoulders are inline. Sometimes even the slightest misalignment can cause unwanted pain. Also, be sure to check if the patient's weight is equally distributed over the bed.

Even without these tips, sometimes the best thing you can do is ask your patient if they are comfortable. Ask them if they need their pillow moved, their bed raised or their position adjusted. The patient will love the extra attention, and help them feel more at home and relaxed. Plus, when they are happy it makes their families more at ease and trust that their loved one is being taken care of properly.

Times may have changed with the advent of patient-controlled analgesia but that doesn't mean that a nurse's job is done. Take those extra minutes, no matter if you're an assistant or an RN, to spend time with your patient and make sure they are as pain free as possible. You will find that it's these little things that can make all the difference in the world. For another blog on this topic, visit <http://www.prnhealthservices.com/my-prn/geriatric-nursing/80>.

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