

Orthogo Physical and Aquatic Therapy Newsletter

Coming Soon

*Bed firmness and
low back pain.*

Clinics

**Orthogo Physical &
Aquatic Therapy**
4151 W. Orleans Street
McHenry, IL 60050
815 344 9727

CARING FOR YOUR ELDERLY PARENTS

Your mom and dad used to take care of you. Now suddenly, they are the ones who need help.

Ideally, we all want our parents to be able to make their own decisions and control their own living environments. However, sometimes the struggle for independence can compromise health and safety. When this happens, it is important to know how to address your parent's needs.

First, you must recognize that your elderly parent may stubbornly refuse any help you offer. They may even deny they have a problem. Do not take this personally. Instead, try to understand their feelings. Perhaps your parent worries that their autonomy is being threatened. It is common for an older person to resist any assistance that makes them feel they are losing privacy, dignity or independence.

The worst thing you can do when encouraging your parent to seek help or change their lifestyle is to make them feel powerless. Instead, keep the following suggestions in mind:

- » Allow them to remain in control as much as possible. Your mission should be keeping them healthy and safe, not micro-managing their life. Give options, not ultimatums.
- » Change takes time. Help by making the smallest changes possible that still provide the desired benefit. Don't try to overhaul your parent's life all at once.
- » Express your own feelings. By sharing your emotions and fears with your parent, you can approach necessary lifestyle changes as a team, not adversaries.

When possible, give your parents the tools that will help them maintain independence or even help each other. For instance, a occupational therapist may be able to help your parents maintain or regain the strength necessary to perform some daily tasks. If they can stay active, they'll be able function better, which will make you both happier.

