

dizzy and needed to take time to get back to feeling strong and healthy if you'd stopped doing things for a while.

As we age, we naturally lose muscle strength and flexibility and our range of motion is reduced. This can happen gradually over the years, without people noticing, but as people age it can become a vicious cycle – it's hard to move, so you don't, and then it becomes harder again to move and so on. It's easier to remember the old phrase - 'Use it or lose it'.

Rather than thinking of 'looking after' people as waiting on them, think of looking after people as encouraging them to keep as active as possible. Volunteers can make people feel needed and able to contribute. In fact, you can play a great role in encouraging and motivating people and giving them confidence.

Does 'active' always mean doing something physical?

No, not at all. It can be something mentally active – like playing a game of chess or backgammon or reading a book or discussing a newspaper article. It can be talking about a piece of music or reminiscing. We think about being active on physical, social and emotional levels. Maybe another way to think about it is that it is the opposite of inactive!

For further discussion

- > Do you have any other questions?
- > What do longer-term volunteers see as the differences between now and when they first started volunteering? And what remains the same?
- > What are some approaches you have developed for working with people who prefer the volunteer to 'do things for' them?