

# Proning Patients with COVID-19: An Injury Prevention Initiative



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## QUESTION

How effective was the proning initiative at NYU Langone Health at preventing proning staff injuries since the onset of COVID-19?

## TOPIC INTEREST

The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic caused an influx in prone positioning seen throughout the medical center. The repositioning, lifting and awkward positions associated with proning patients presented another route of injury for staff members. NYU's SPHM Department took heed of the potential stresses associated with proning and launched targeted education to prevent proning injuries. To ensure staff and patient safety the department:

- Trained and assisted existing clinical staff on proper prone positioning techniques
- Became integral members of established prone teams to ensure SPH techniques during prone sessions
- Developed and implemented a prone checklist to ensure patient and staff safety during every mobilization
- Commenced prone training along with competency testing at critical care RN orientations to ensure new hire proficiency
- Efficiently collaborated with rehab, respiratory, medicine, nursing and anesthesia to ensure shared goals for prescribed positioning

## EVIDENCE

Published research shows that the biomechanical stresses associated with proning patients is quite high on healthcare workers. Regardless of the method used to prone patients, these findings are based on three common movement elements of proning: lateral positioning, rotation from supine to side lying, and lowering from side lying to prone. NYU's SPHM Department effectively implemented a proning initiative that included allocating specific healthcare personnel to the prone team for consistency; assigning prone champions to facilitate education and training; and encouraging collaboration to ensure that all members of the healthcare team share the same goals for each patient. Resulting data reveals no proning injuries for the year 2020 and one (3%) for the year 2021.

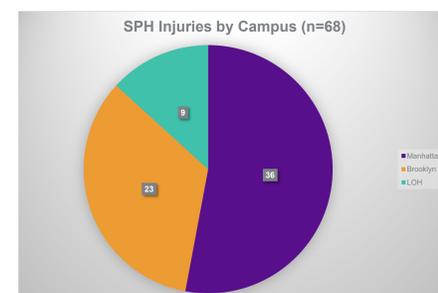
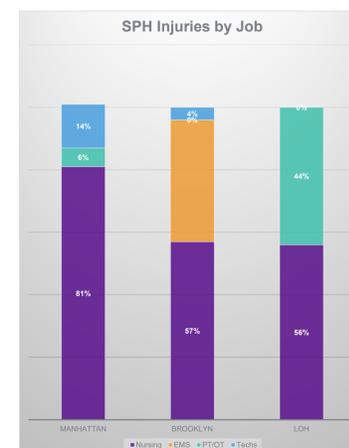
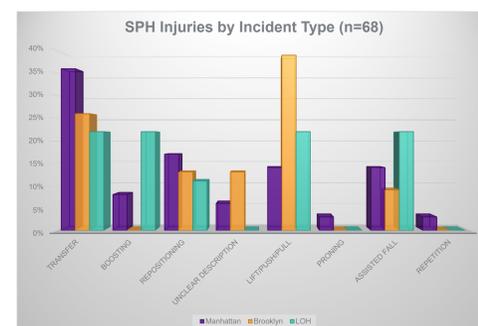
## STRENGTH OF EVIDENCE

The evidence strongly suggests that implementing a proning initiative that focuses on adequately training existing and new staff members on proper proning techniques while effectively collaborating with key healthcare team members to be essential in preventing staff injuries. NYU data over the span of two years demonstrates very low staff injuries associated with proning despite the performance of frequent proning tasks throughout the medical center.

## PROJECT VALUE

This project serves as a valuable resource to those that aim to combat ongoing SPH related injuries. The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has introduced another channel for staff injury – proning. With this, it's important to control the risk of injury by providing workers with appropriate measures to avoid dangerous manual handling techniques. Prone education and training has proven to be an effective tool in preventing and/or reducing injuries likely to occur during manual yet necessary prone positioning of patients.

## FIGURES



## CONCLUSION

The SPHM Department's consistent presence and evolving initiatives has allowed staff proning injuries to be kept at bay. Impressive data findings further motivate ongoing SPHM trainings and targeted education to benefit clinical staff site wide.

## REFERENCES

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