

# Lifting and Transferring Patients

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- Caring for people who are not very mobile tends to involve a great deal of lifting. You may need to assist them from the bed to the chair or the wheelchair and back to bed, and at times, you may need to help a person who has fallen onto the floor.
- Improper lifting could injure your back and jeopardize your future ability to work.
- Practice preventative care, which includes:
  - Good posture
  - Stretching and exercise
  - Lifting and transferring skills
  - Proper lifting devices

# Lifting and Transferring Techniques

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- Serious back, shoulder and neck injuries occur as a result of poor lifting and transferring habits. The following are some tips to reduce the strain on your back and the possibility of injuries. Protecting your back is working smarter, not harder
- When lifting and transferring, the most important consideration is safety for yourself and the patient.
- When needed, use the right equipment.
- Plan the job, move anything that is in the path.
- Maintain the correct posture: Keep back straight and knees bent. If you must bend from the waist, tighten your stomach muscles while bending and lifting. Bending your knees slightly will put the stress on your legs, not your back.

# Lifting and Transferring Techniques Cont.

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- Never twist when lifting, transferring or reaching. Pick up your feet and pivot your whole body in the direction of the move. Move your torso as one unit. Twisting is one of the leading cause of injury.
- Maintain a wide base of support. Keep your feet at least shoulder width apart or wider when lifting or moving.
- Hold the person or object close to you, not at arm's length. Holding things close to our body can minimize the effects of the weight.
- Pushing is easier than pulling, because our own weight adds to the force.
- Always face the patient or object you are lifting or moving.

# Lifting and Transferring Techniques Cont.

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- Take the following steps when transferring from the bed to a wheelchair or bedside chair:
  - Plan the job and prepare to lift.
  - Place the chair at a slight angle to the side of the bed.
  - If using a wheelchair, lock both brakes. Fold up the foot pedals and remove the footrests.
  - Stabilize the bed so it will not move.
  - Put footwear on the patient.
  - Lower the bed so the patient's feet will reach the floor.
  - Move the person to the edge of the bed. First move the upper trunk and then the legs one at a time.
  - Place the person's legs over the side of the bed.

# Lifting and Transferring Techniques Cont.

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- Continued:
  - Place your arms around the person, circling the back in a sort of hug.
  - Raise the person to a sitting position on the side of the bed.
  - Place a gait belt around the patient's waist if you desire.
  - Gradually slide the person's buttocks forward until his or her feet are flat on the floor.
  - Place your feet on both sides of the person's feet for support. Your feet should be far enough apart to give you a good base of support.
  - Have the person lean forward and if possible place his or her arms around your shoulders. Do not allow the person to encircle your neck, this can injure the neck.

# Lifting and Transferring Techniques Cont.

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- Continued:
  - Allow the person to reach for the far wheelchair arm.
  - Bend our hips and knees while keeping your back straight.
  - Place your arms around the person's waist.
  - Keep the person's knees stabilized by holding your knees against theirs.
  - Pull up to lift the patient, straightening your knees and hips as you both stand.
  - Keep the patient close to your body. Keep your knees and hips slightly bent.
  - When the person is high enough to clear the armrest or chair surface, turn by taking small steps. Keep the person's knees blocked with your own knees.

# Lifting and Transferring Techniques Cont.

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- Continued:
  - When turned, bend the hips and knees to squat, lowering the patient to the seat.
  - Replace the footrests. Adjust the height of the foot pedals so the person will be sitting with a 90-degree angle at the hips and knees.
  - When transporting a person in a wheelchair, pull it backward up steps or curbs.
  - Follow the same principles when returning the person to bed.

# What if they FALL!

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- Once a patient has started to fall, it is almost impossible to stop the fall DO NOT TRY!
- Instead of trying to stop the fall, try to guide the patient to the floor.
- Once the patient is on the floor, get emergency medical help if needed, and use proper equipment to get patient up.
- Then report incident to office immediately.

# Transfers IN and OUT of Cars

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- Put the front seat of the car as far back as possible.
- Position the wheelchair at a 90-degree angle to the car seat.
- Bend your knees and hips in a squat.
- Place your arms underneath the person's armpits and around their upper part of his or her back. The person may place his or her arms around your shoulders but not your neck. Grasp the person's upper back and do not pull under the person's arms. Hold him or her close to you.
- Straighten your legs and hips slightly as you smoothly lift the person's torso into the car, placing his or her buttocks on the seat. Move your feet to turn, do not twist.
- Be sure the person's buttocks are as far back toward the drivers side as possible before lifting his or her legs into the car. When lifting his legs, keep your back straight.

# Devices That May Help

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- Bed Controls- raise or lower the bed to a comfortable and safe position for you and your patient.
- Slide boards- help to reduce friction so the patient can slide from the bed to another surface.
- Trapeze- a trapeze over the bed can allow patients to help you move them. They can grasp the trapeze, pull themselves up, and assist as you move them.
- Gait belt- is made from heavy canvas with a sturdy buckle. Place the belt around the patient's waist and use it to assist moving him or her.
- Mechanical lifts- can lift a patient who is heavy or non-weight bearing.
- Back braces- help provide support to muscles in the lower back.