

Caregiver Assistance News

“CARING FOR YOU...CARING FOR OTHERS”

Lift Correctly – Save Your Back

Being a caregiver puts you at risk for back injuries. Many occur when lifting, moving, transferring or changing the position of the one in your care. Improper movements can cause injury to the person being moved, such as abrasions to skin, strains, sprains and tears—even fractures. Learn how to avoid harming yourself *and* the one in your care.

The Golden Rule. . .

First, consider the task at hand. Think about what you are capable of, what assistance you might need and to what degree the one in your care can assist you. Then, eliminate hazards such as clutter, throw rugs, or excess furniture. When planning on the space you need to move, pivot, or transfer, allow for more space than you think you need.

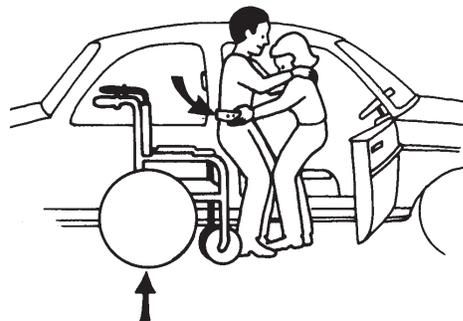
- ☑ Let the person you are helping do as much as he can do safely.
- ☑ Never allow the person you are helping to put his arms around your neck.

- ☑ Have the person PUSH off rails, chair arms, etc. (No pulling)
- ☑ Avoid sudden jerking movements; move slowly and communicate what you are doing and need the person to do. Remember, if the person in your care does not move often, he may become lightheaded with a change in position—**move slowly!**
- ☑ Have all equipment you need ready and in working order, such as a transfer belt, chair, wheelchair, commode, or Hoyer lift. If transferring to or from a bed, wheelchair or commode with locking brakes, make sure they are locked.
- ☑ If, during a transfer, you start to “lose” the person, do not try to hold him up. Doing so will probably result in injury. Instead, lower him slowly to the floor and call for assistance.

FAST FACT - Car Transfer Safety

An estimated 37,000 people 65 and older are injured each year when entering or exiting a vehicle. About 40 percent of these injuries were due to falls.

Source: CDC; Journal of American Geriatrics Society; April 2008

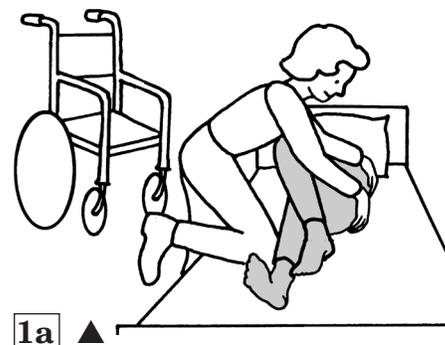


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Transferring from Bed to Wheelchair Without a Transfer Belt

- 1**
 - Place the wheelchair at a 45-degree angle to the bed so that the person will be transferring to his stronger side.
 - **Lock the wheels** of the chair (you can use a wheel block) and the wheels of the bed.
 - Tell the person what you are going to do.
 - Bring him to a sitting position with his legs over the edge of the bed following steps a, b, c, and d.
 - Let him rest a moment if he feels lightheaded.
 - Put his shoes on.



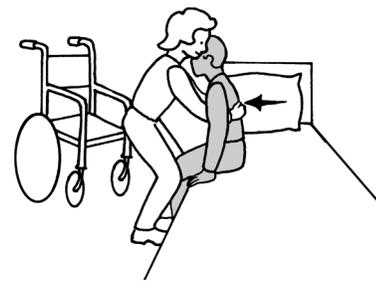
1a ▲



1b ▲



1c ▲



1d ▲

- 2**
 - Put your arms around his chest and clasp your hands behind his back.
 - Support the leg that is farther from the wheelchair between your legs.
- 3**
 - Lean back, shift your leg, and lift.
 - Pivot toward the chair.

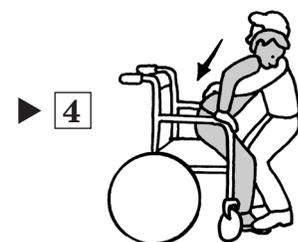


2



3

- 4**
 - Bend your knees and let him bend toward you.
 - Lower the person into the wheelchair.
 - Adjust him comfortably in the chair.



4

Taking Care of Yourself— **For Less Back Pain, Quit Smoking**

A study found that patients with severe back pain who quit smoking report less pain and greater improvement than patients who continued to smoke. Also, those who continued to smoke during treatment had no improvement in pain. Nicotine increases pain. Another proof that smoking is bad for you—and your back.

Source: *Journal of Bone & Joint Surgery*, December 2012; American Association of Orthopaedic Surgeons www.aaos.org



NOTE - Transfers Safety

Seek training from a physical therapist to reduce the risk of injury to yourself or the person in your care. The therapist will correct any mistakes you make and can take into account special problems. To determine the best procedure for you to use, the therapist will consider the physical condition of the person in your care and the furniture and room arrangements in the home.

Inspiration

*To handle yourself, use your head;
to handle others, use your heart.”
~ Eleanor Roosevelt*

Memory Care

Transfers

During transfers people with dementia may feel more vulnerable and may resist out of fear of falling or not knowing where they are going. Any time the person with dementia resists you, consider whether the person understands what you want him to do and whether he feels safe. Fear and confusion are often the cause of resistance.

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***SAFETY TIPS*—Your Weight Matters**

Maintain good posture, and exercise to strengthen your back and stomach muscles. If you are overweight, lose weight. Excess weight puts extra stress on back and stomach muscles and on joints. One pound of extra weight puts 4 extra pounds of stress on knee joints. Obesity is one of the biggest risk factors for developing back pain and arthritis because it speeds the destruction of joint-cushioning cartilage. Losing weight—even just 10 or 11 pounds—can cut your risk in half.

To prevent injuries to yourself, get plenty of rest and maintain:

- ☛ Good nutrition and physical fitness.
- ☛ Good body mechanics.
- ☛ A stress management program such as daily meditation.
- ☛ A stretching routine before you lift and a back strengthening exercise program.

Source: *Harvardhealth*

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“ C A R I N G F O R Y O U ... C A R I N G F O R O T H E R S ”

Q U I C K Q U I Z

Body mechanics involve standing and moving one’s body so as to prevent injury, avoid fatigue, and make the best use of strength. When you learn how to control and balance your own body, you can safely control and move another person.

Answer True or False to the questions below.

1. During transfers people may feel more vulnerable and may resist out of fear or not knowing where they are going.
T F
2. A study found that patients with severe back pain who quit smoking report less pain and greater improvement than patients who continued to smoke.
T F
3. Excess weight puts extra stress on back and stomach muscles and on joints.
T F
4. Many back injuries occur when lifting, moving, transferring or changing the position of the one in your care.
T F
5. Entering or exiting a vehicle is not dangerous for a senior and cannot cause a fall.
T F
6. In dementia care, fear and confusion are often the cause of resistance.
T F
7. If, during a transfer, you start to “lose” the person, do not try to hold him up. Doing so will probably result in injury.
T F
8. If a senior does not move often, he may become lightheaded with a change in position.
T F
9. PULL the person out of the chair to get him up.
T F
10. Obesity is one of the biggest risk factors for developing back pain and losing weight—even just 10 or 11 pounds—can cut your risk in half.
T F

Name _____

Signature _____ Date _____