

Taking Care of Your Back

Lift and Transfer Training

In physically demanding and static occupations, back pain and injuries are very common. In the health care field, back injuries are most often seen when moving a consumer. There are a variety of injuries and preventative measures you can take to care for your back. The best way to treat an injury is to prevent it! Prevention starts with you. Being physically fit and maintaining proper posture and technique when at home and at work will help reduce your risk of injury.

Risk Factors for Back Injury

1. Age – Back pain is more common the older you get, more wear and tear on your body
2. Lack of Exercise – weak abdominal and back muscles as well as shortened less flexible muscles
3. Improper Lifting Techniques and Postures – static and dynamic positions
4. Duration, Repetition and Awkward Postures – lead to fatigue, poor positions and sustained muscle use
5. Too Heavy of a Load – more weight and force then individual can handle

Proper Lifting Technique

Step 1 – Think ahead

Step 2 – Get a firm footing for good balance

Step 3 – Bend at your knees not at your waist

Step 4 – Grip the load with the palms of the hands and fingers

Step 5 – Tighten stomach muscles

Step 6 – Use your body weight to start the load moving

Step 7 – Keep the arms and elbows close to your body when lifting

Step 8 – Do not twist your body

Step 9 – If the load is to be lowered, bend the knees again

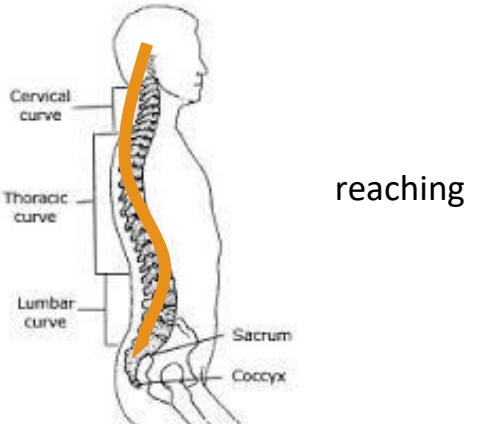
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Lifting Position and General Tips:

- Maintain the natural 'S' curve of your spine
- Wide base of support, can stagger feet
- Get close to the load
- Keep arms and elbows close to your body – limit
- Bend your knees not your back
- Keep your head up and chin tucked in
- Activate your core muscles
- Move your feet – do not twist under load
- Use assistance if load is too heavy or awkward
- Do not jerk the load when trying to lift



When Transferring a Consumer

- **Communication**
 - Always communicate the plan and steps for the transfer as well as the role each individual will take – yourself, consumer and additional staff (if applicable)
 - This will ensure everyone understands and is comfortable with their task and that there are minimal complications throughout the transfer
 - Use cueing and prompts for when a movement is to occur; ready-set-go, 1-2-3-go
- **Set the Environment**
 - Clear the clutter around the consumer and surfaces
 - Make the transfer hazard free – remove arm rests, foot plates
 - Clear the path
 - Have all necessary equipment and materials needed for transfer and care after transfer

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- **Body Mechanics**

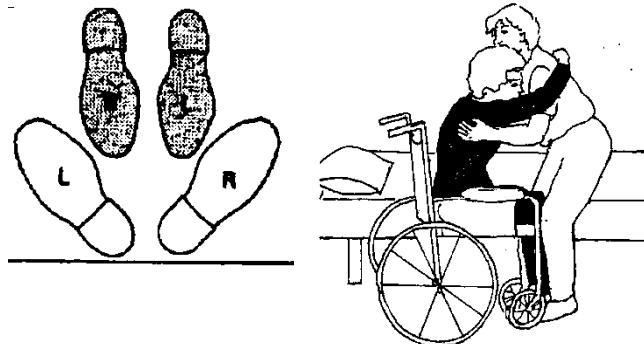
- Maintain the natural 'S' curve of your spine
- Wide base of support, can stagger feet
- Get close to the load – decreases the load and helps maintain proper joint position
- Keep arms and elbows close to your body – limit reaching
- Bend your knees not your back
- Keep your head up and chin tucked in
- Activate your core muscles
- Move your feet – do not twist under load

- **Safety**

- Ensure all brakes are on
- Equipment in good working order
- Surfaces are dry
- Consumer is left in a safe position at the end of transfer or repositioning
- Take care of yourself, if you are not comfortable, ask for help

One Person Pivot Transfer

Can be done when you are moving the person alone



- **Communication**

- Communicate the plan and steps to be taken by both the Personal Attendant and consumer
- Cue the consumer to use their arms to push up (if able)
- Count 1-2-3 as rocking for momentum

- **Set the Environment**

- Position chair close to the surface they are transferring to – consumer should be pivoting towards their stronger side

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- Surfaces are clear and ready – brakes on, arm rests removed, surface dry
- Make sure their feet are flat on the floor, underneath the consumer as much as possible and parallel to each other before initiating standing
- **Body Mechanics**
 - Wide stance with knees bent - Get as close as you can to the consumer
 - Consumer moves forward to edge of the surface. Use side to side shifting (place hands near buttocks to assist)
 - Consumer leans forward to get 'nose over toes'
 - Place your hands under the person's arms and around to their back. If you are able to place your hands close to the consumer's hips, this will assist in supporting them to a standing position
 - Once standing cue consumer to start taking small steps – shuffling to get to destination with a continuous motion – cue them to feel the surface behind their legs and stick bottom out, slowly lower to surface (bend/lower with them)
 - Ensure you move your feet in order to avoid twisting
- **Safety**
 - Personal Attendant assists only as necessary, do not lift, or pull the consumer
 - Brakes are on, consumer does not pull on Personal Attendant

Transfer Board

- **Communication:**
 - Communicate the plan and steps to be taken by both yourself and the consumer
- **Set the Environment**
 - Place the chair (where the consumer is coming "from") on a 30-45 degree angle to surface the consumer is transferring "to". If not possible then get the chair as close as possible.
 - Remove clutter and prepare the areas
 - Prepare equipment
 - Consumer to shift their bottom to the front of the sitting surface
 - Place one end of the slide board under the consumers buttocks by having them lean

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to opposite side and the other end on the transfer site (where they are transferring “to”.)

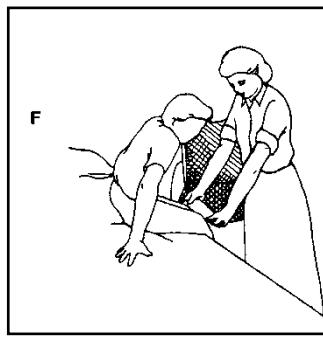
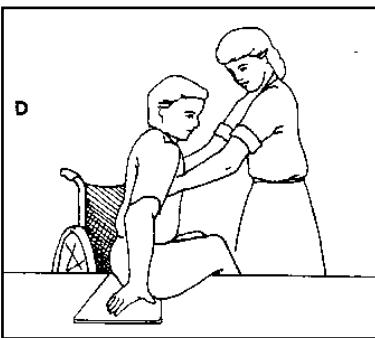
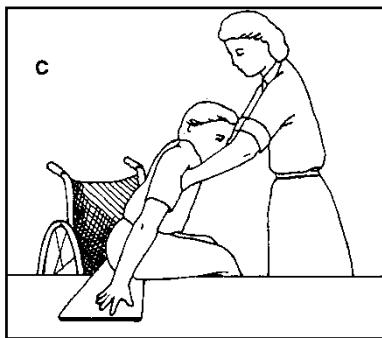
- On the count of 3, the person pushes up and slides across the board onto the transfer site.

- **Body Mechanics**

- Wide base of support, weight shift from leg to leg, move your feet and don't reach, bend your knees not your back, do not pull them or let them pull you
- Encourage them to stay tall and not bent forward
- Assist with consumer's legs

- **Safety**

- Remove slide board and reposition them on surface as needed
- Ensure all equipment is good working condition, brakes on, surfaces clean and dry



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Wheelchair Repositioning - from the front

- Stand in front of the consumer with a wide stance and knees bent
- Have consumer lean forward, both feet firmly on the floor with their knees touching yours
- Count 1-2-3-slide and have consumer push through their feet and hands (if able) while guiding them into the back of the chair with your knees. If it is too hard on the knees, you can also place a pillow between your knees and the consumer's knees.



Wheelchair Repositioning – from the side

- Have consumer lean forward in chair as before
- Personal Attendant stands to the side of the consumer with a wide stance, hips facing consumer
- Personal Attendant places close arm around consumer
- Consumer leans towards Personal Attendant lifting opposite pelvis, avoid shearing skin
- Personal Attendant then assists client to shift their raised hip/pelvis backward, guiding it or using a slide sheet
- Personal Attendant then moves to the other side of the chair and repeat steps for the opposite hip until in desired position in chair



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Wheelchair Repositioning – from the back

- This method works best when the consumer is sitting on a slide sheet or draw sheet
- Have consumer lean forward in chair as before
- Personal Attendant stands behind the consumer's chair with a wide stance, hips facing consumer
- Gripping the slide or draw sheet, count 1-2-3-slide and have consumer push through their feet and hands (if able) while shifting your weight to get them to the back of the chair.

Repositioning a Consumer in Bed

Important for various reasons:

- Pressure sores, encourage blood flow
- Proper posture due to sliding down the bed
- Preparing for sitting up and consumer care – such as dressing or washing, all follow the same first steps.

- **Communication**
 - Communicate the plan and steps to be taken by both the Personal Attendant and consumer
 - Count to 3 when ready to move consumer
 - Encourage consumer to help as able
- **Set Environment**
 - Ensure bed is ready - clutter free, set bed height, brakes are on and rail is down
 - Ensure slide sheet or draw sheet is under consumers shoulders and hips
- **Body Mechanics**
 - Adopt a wide base of support
 - Take up slack of slide sheet, maintain a neutral joint position and keep arms close to the body
 - Have client in crook lying position (knees bent) so they can push through their feet (if able)

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- Shift your weight to leg in the direction of the movement (generally towards the head of the bed)



- **Safety**

- Ensure consumer is left in a safe position after repositioning
- All brakes are on and rails are up - as needed

Rolling a Consumer in Bed

A consumer is rolled in bed when preparing for sitting, putting a slide sheet or sling underneath them, repositioning in bed and rolling them for care

- **Communication**

- Communicate the plan and steps to be taken by both the Personal Attendant and consumer

- **Set Environment**

- Lower bed rails and lock brakes – allows you to get closer to the consumer
- Clear clutter from in and around bed
- Have equipment ready (sling, slide sheet, self-care items, etc.)

- **Body Mechanics**

- Stand on side of bed that consumer is rolling towards (if possible)
- Adopt a wide base of support (or knee on bed stance – this will help you get closer)
- Bend up their leg farthest away from so they are in a one leg bridge position
- Bring their arm farthest away across their body towards you and their bottom arm out straight

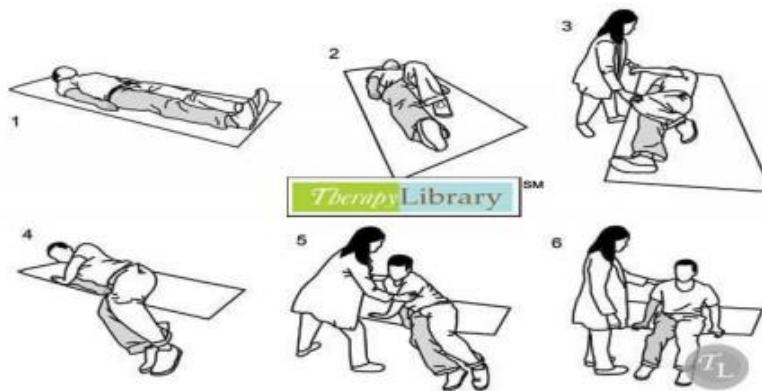
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- Place a hand on their far shoulder and other hand on their far hip/pelvis (this allows you to use your elbow as a lever to assist in rolling the consumer)
- Give warning and roll consumer in a fluid motion, have them push through their foot and assist (if able)

- **Safety**

- Leave consumer in safe position – rails, brakes, pillows



Lying to Sitting

- **Communication**

- Communicate the plan and steps to be taken by both the Personal Attendant and consumer

- **Set Environment**

- Ensure bed rails down and brakes are on
- Bed at appropriate height and is clear of clutter

- **Body Mechanics**

- Repeat steps from 'Rolling a Consumer in Bed'
- If consumer has a stronger side ensure that is the side they are on that side (This will enable them to assist during sitting up phase by pushing into the bed with their elbow)
- If consumer can tolerate legs being lowered off of the edge of the bed then able to continue, but if not a second helper may be required
- Place hand on their hip and other hand up under their shoulder

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- Lunge forward leaning weight through consumers hips and help support the head and neck while coming into sitting position
- **Safety**
 - Stand close and have continuous communication with consumer to reassure them they will not fall out of bed
 - Bed at appropriate height so consumers feet can touch the floor
 - Do not let them pull on you during any portion of tasks
 - Assess consumer after sitting to ensure they are stable before removing hands



Transporting Portable Ceiling Lift Motor

- Often the track does not access all area or is required to share between consumers
- When detaching, carrying and reattaching the motor for the ceiling lift, be sure to follow the general lifting rules as previously discussed
- Key items to remember
 - Keep lift close to you when removing or reattaching the motor
 - Use the extension pole as needed to avoid over reaching – pull cord down to a comfortable level
 - Bend your knees and not your back
 - Be cautious of who and what is under track

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Ceiling Track Lift

- **Communication**
 - Communicate the plan and steps to be taken by both the Personal Attendant and consumer
- **Set Environment**
 - Ensure a clear path to destination and all equipment needed is in place
 - Clear the clutter around consumer
 - Set bed height to minimize bending your back
 - Have sling ready and near
 - Have the motor attached to ceiling (as previously discussed)
- **Body Mechanics**
 - Prepare consumer for a roll in bed to place the sling under them
 - Place sling laid out behind consumer, roll them over to opposite side and put sling flat
 - Prepare sling straps for attachment to lift
 - Bring lift along ceiling track directly above client and lower bars
 - Guide bars into position, keeping them away from consumer's head (guide not pull/push)
 - Have bars low enough to not pull up on sling straps when attaching them
 - Slowly raise the sling, ensuring that all straps are attached properly
 - When lifted and clear of the bed, begin to move the lift along the track
 - If consumer is uncomfortable or feeling unsafe, lower sling and adjust their position
 - Guide the consumer to the new destination, follow the track keeping your hips and feet in direction of travel and do not twist
 - Bring consumer into position over the new surface
 - Begin lowering the consumer, guiding them down to surface
 - Maintain a wide stance, knees bent and minimal reaching
 - If transferring to a chair, commode or tub bench, make sure consumer is positioned to the back
 - Sling should now be lax to remove straps from bar, make sure consumer is safe

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and comfortable before removing straps and equipment.

- More mobile consumers can have sling removed from behind them in chair, whereas heavy involved consumers the sling is left in place (may vary depending on consumer preference)

- **Safety**

- Ensure the track lift is in good working order
- Ensure the sling is in good condition: clean, damage free and straps not twisted
- Avoid and be aware of sling bunching and shearing of skin
- If you do not know how to operate the track lift refer to the operating procedure manual
- Stay close to consumer at all times
- Communicate and reassure the consumer during the whole process



Bathing a Consumer

- **Communication**

- Communicate the plan and steps to be taken by both the Personal Attendant and consumer

- **Set Environment**

- Ensure bathroom and all necessities are in the bathroom and clutter/hazard free
- Prepare bath or shower
- Get all transfer equipment needed depending on the type of transfer required – wheelchair, commode chair, sling, transfer board

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• Body Mechanics

- Follow body mechanics as previously discussed depending on transfer type – wide base of support, weight shifting, bent knees
- Adopt a preferred position for bathing (kneel, sit on tub edge or stand in tub with consumer)
- Ensure you can get close enough to consumer to limit reaching, bending and twisting actions
- Turn consumer towards you if unable to access both sides of their body (limit reaching, bending and twisting)

• Safety

- Ensure surfaces are dry and hazard free – consumer, floor, counter
- Ensure tub/shower are clean and in good working order
- Do not allow consumer to pull on you to steady self

