

A BRIEF LOOK AT -



TRANSFERRING YOUR PATIENT/CLIENT

There are times when you will be assigned the Task of transferring a patient/client, usually from a bed to a chair and back again. It is important to do it safely for him/her and you. Let's review the basic principles of good body mechanics first.

BODY MECHANICS REVIEW

- Maintain good posture and proper body alignment. Keep your back straight with knees slightly bent and your body weight evenly distributed on both feet.
- Place your feet about 12 inches apart to maintain a broad base of support when transferring a person.
- Use groups of larger, stronger muscles that are found in the shoulders, upper arms, thighs, and hips when transferring a person.
- Position yourself so that you are close to and facing the bed or the chair.
- Use both arms and hands when transferring a person.



- Bend your hips and knees while keep your back straight and push, using the thigh muscles when transferring a person
- Wear sensible, close-toe, non-slip low heeled shoes.
- Immediately report any employee injury to the office.

TRANSFERRING A PERSON

This lesson provides general information about transferring a person. Always follow your Supervisor's instructions because there could be special circumstances in place for your patient/client.

Some people spend hours in bed or sitting in a chair due to their physical disability or intellectual impairment. Some people can transfer themselves on their own or need just minimal assistance and can direct you in helping them. Others need you to transfer them due to their functional impairment in order to prevent pressure sores, which are called pressure ulcers, also, and contractures. Your supervisor might assign you a specific transferring schedule. Every two hours is the accepted standard. Your Supervisor will fill in the hands on the clock on the documentation form if it is appropriate.



LEVELS OF ASSISTANCE NEEDED

The level of assistance needed when transferring a person is based on several variables:

- * type of disability,
- * age,
- * flexibility,
- * strength,
- * height and stability of the chair/bed, and
- * presence/absence of armrests on the chair.

Maximum Assist



You should get someone to help you or use an assistive device such as a mechanical lift or transfer/slide board. If the patient/client can bear 50% or less of his/her weight, you may need to use a gait/transfer belt.

You should get training before you use the assistive devices.

Moderate Assist

If the patient/client can bear 50% or more of his/her weight, you may need to use a gait/transfer belt.

You may use verbal cues such as “lean forward,” “push yourself up,” “turn toward the right,” etc., as appropriate.

Minimum Assist

You might not have to use a gait/transfer belt.

You might use a transfer/slide board.

You can give hands on assistance following the steps below to give verbal instructions and physically guide the patient/client.



STEPS FOR ALL

General Guidelines

- * Know your limits! Don't transfer anyone alone heavier than what you can handle.
- * Gather the supplies you'll need such as the gait/transfer belt, mechanical lift, slide board, and your patient's/client's shoes and socks.
- * Wash your hands.
- * Tell the individual what you are going to do.

- * Provide privacy.
- * Check the person to see if s/he is sweating or has soiled herself/himself. Wash the person first to provide comfort measures. (If you did, wash your hands again.)
- * Plan your movements in advance.
- * Verbally instruct the patient/client on each step of the transfer.
- * Never grab, pull, or lift the person's elbows, shoulders, or wrists as this can cause an injury to the joints.
- * Put the equipment away and wash your hands.

Transferring Using a Gait/Transfer Belt

Considerations



Gait/transfer belts come in various shapes, colors, types, and sizes. They can be padded or unpadded. They can have loops for the attendant/caregiver to use or not. Be sure to use the right size for your patient/client.

As handy as these are to use to transfer your patient/client, they should not be used if the person:

- * has had abdominal or back surgery in the last six to eight weeks;
- * has an ostomy, G-tube, hernias, or Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD);
- * has monitoring equipment, tubes, or lines that could be interfered with because of the pressure; or
- * is pregnant.

Procedure from Bed to Chair

- * Position the chair next to the bed, ideally in front of a wall or stationary object.
 - * If using a wheelchair, lock the wheels and remove the foot rests.
- * Lock the bed.
- * Lower the head and foot of the bed if they are elevated.
- * Raise the bed to a level so the person's can be placed firmly on the floor.
 - * Depending on the person's physical status, you can put his/her shoes and socks on while s/he is in bed or after s/he is sitting up on the side of the bed.

- * Lower the side rail of the bed on the side where you are standing.
- * Ask the person to sit on the edge of the bed or position him/her in that position. Support the back and shoulders. Let the person sit a minute or two to get balanced.

* Follow the instructions given by the manufacturer and your Supervisor. Generally, place the gait/transfer belt on top of clothing and around the person's waist, above the pelvic bone, and below the rib cage. For females, be sure breast tissue is above the belt.



* Adjust it so it is snug; but, not uncomfortable for the person. You should be able to slip your hand between the belt and the person.

* Tuck the excess end of the belt through the waist band.

* ALWAYS verify it is properly closed before transferring the person!

* ALWAYS grasp the gait/transfer belt from underneath.

* Rock gently back and forth three times with the person. On the third time, gently raise the person up to a standing position.

- * The person may hold onto your shoulders; but, never your neck!
- * Stand still for a minute or two so the person can get balanced.

* Using small steps, turn so the person's back is facing the chair. Encourage him/her to help by reaching for the chair behind him/her.

* Bend forward while bending your knees and lower the person into the chair.

- * If using a wheelchair, put the leg rests back on it.
- * Position him/her so s/he is comfortable.
 - * If using a wheelchair, leave it locked or unlock it depending on the circumstances.

* Remove the gait/transfer belt or loosen it when not in use.

Transferring Without Using a Gait/Transfer Belt

Follow all of the steps above, except the move from the bed to the chair.

* Plant your feet firmly on the floor, put your legs outside the person's legs at the sides of his/her knees, bend forward, put your arms under the person's shoulders.

- * Tell the person to hold on to your shoulders; but, never your neck.

* Lock your knees and knees, against the person's, slowly stand up.

- * Keep your back straight.

* Turn the person so s/he's backed against the chair and proceed as indicated above.

Transferring Using a Mechanical Lift



Mechanical lifts are often used to move a person who can't stand up alone, is heavy, or is unable to help with the move at all due to physical or mental impairment.

A lift might be electric or manually hand powered.

It has slings and straps.

It might be attached to the ceiling, floor, wall, or may be moved from place to place when needed.

You should never use a mechanical lift until you have received training. If you care for more than one patient/client and they have different kinds of mechanical lifts, you must receive training on each one because there are so many variables from one manufacturer's product to another's. Following are general considerations.

Transferring from Bed to Wheelchair Using a Mechanical Lift

- * Roll the patient/client onto his/her side.
- * Slide the sling under your patient/client per your Supervisor's instructions.
 - * Be sure there are no wrinkles in the sling.
- * Roll the person to the other side and pull the rest of the sling under him/her.
- * If the lift is one that you move place to place, put the legs under the bed and open them to the wide position.
- * Correctly attach the sling's hooks, straps, chains, etc. and raise the person by pumping the lift. Direct the patient/client to fold his/her arms over the chest and to not move.
- * Move the individual directly over the chair and lower the person into the chair slowly.
- * Unhook the sling from the lift. It may be left under your patient/client for the next transfer.
- * Repeat the steps in the opposite order when putting the individual back to bed.

Transferring Using a Transfer/Slide Board

A transfer/slide board is used when the person can't stand; but, does have good upper body strength and can move himself/herself. Some individuals might need stand-by assistance from you.

The board is usually made of plastic or wood. The two surfaces should be the same height. One end of the board goes under the person's hip and thigh. The other end is placed on the surface to which the person is transferring. The person slides over to the other surface, shifts his/her weight and the board can be pulled out.



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QUIZ

1. An essential element of good body mechanics is to wear shoes that are in style.
 True
 False
2. A person who is transferring from the bed to the chair can be moved by one person or two people or with a mechanical lift.
 True
 False
3. You should gather your supplies, wash your hands, and tell the person what you are going to do.
 True
 False
4. When using a mechanical lift you should:
 - a. put the sling under the person and be sure there are no wrinkles.
 - b. be sure the legs of the mechanical lift are spread apart widely.
 - c. position the person over the chair and lower the sling slowly.
 - d. All of the above.
 - e. None of the above.
5. Transfer/slide boards are used for individuals who can slide across from one surface to another that are at the same height and with minimal or no assistance.
 True
 False

Signature

Date

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ANSWER KEY

1. False
2. True
3. True
4. d
5. True