



Tips for Home or School Tips for Safe Lifting and Transferring

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There may be times when it is necessary to lift someone or help them to transfer out of a wheelchair to another location. Anytime you need to assist someone in transferring or if someone has to be lifted, you want to make certain that both the person and you are safe. Of course, lifting and transferring infants, toddlers, children, adolescents, or young adults require different techniques and guidelines due to the varying sizes and weights of the different age groups. However, following a few simple guidelines can help to make certain that neither of you will be hurt — regardless of the age and size of the individual being lifted or transferred.

On the Strength for Caring website (<http://www.strengthforcaring.com/>), Helen Pereira (2006-2008) offers the following important tips relevant to safe lifting:

- **“Make a plan.** Make sure the room is set up properly before attempting a transfer. For example, remove stand-alone rugs, toys, or furniture that may be in the way. Ensure a clear path between you and your destination.
- **Use you legs and stomach muscles to help lift.** When you lift, be mindful of your posture and maintain the curve in your low back. It is important to tighten your abdominal muscles and use your legs when lifting (remember to keep breathing).
- **Move your feet when you turn.** Move your feet along with your body to avoid twisting. This will help protect your back while performing the transfer.
- **Get as close as you can to your loved one.** Whenever lifting, holding something closer to your body will lessen the load.
- **Get a second person to assist you as needed.”** (Retrieved from <http://www.strengthforcaring.com/daily-care/safety-and-mobility-lifting-and-transferring/how-to-help-transfer-someone-safely/> on May 27, 2008).

Have a written procedures. An additional safety rule requires having written procedures specific to each individual (<http://www.nvsig.org/downloads/codes-specialied.pdf>). There should be specific guidelines in place that specify whether or not a person requires assistance from two people for lifts or transfers based on the individual's current weight and height. Is the person able to assist with the lift or transfer and how? Has the person's weight reached a level



that a mechanical lifting device such as a Hoyer lift is required? In what situations is the person to be lifted and/or transferred? What are the training requirements for those assisting with lifts and/or transfers? The protocol should be written and followed.

Use of a transfer/gait belt. A transfer or gait belt is an aid that is used to help someone lift and/or transfer a person short distances. The belt is placed around the person's waist and grasped by the person who is doing the lifting or transferring. Using a transfer/gait belt makes it less likely that the person assisting will be tempted to grab the person's shirt, pants, etc., which could easily result in someone getting hurt as the clothing moves, tears, etc. A transfer belt allows a firm grasp. Remember that you should be trained in correct use of a transfer belt; a physical therapist should be able to assist you.



Image from abledata.com

Use of a transfer board. Sliding or transfer boards provide a bridge for an individual to slide from chair, bed, etc. to another while remaining in a seated position. Depending upon the skills of the



Image from abledata.com

individual being transferred, the board might be used independently or with assistance from another person. As with the transfer belt, you should be trained to ensure correct use of the board.



Image from <http://www.dinf.ne.jp/doc/english/global/david/dwe002/dwe00245.htm>

References & Resources

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