

Tips to Help Caregivers Move or Transfer

Learn proper body mechanics. Ask for a physical therapy referral from your physician to teach you how to use your body so you don't get hurt.

- Save your back. If you feel a strain, get help; don't do it alone. This is for your safety and for the safety of the person you are trying to move. If you hurt your back, you aren't going to be able to care for someone else.
- Talk to the person and explain what you are doing and going to do. Talk through the process as you continue with the transfer, ask him/her to help you when able.
- Make sure the person's legs are on the floor before trying to stand. Use a high, firm chair with arms whenever possible. It is easier to move someone from there than from a sofa or overstuffed chair.
- If someone is in bed, first roll him/her to the side of the bed and help him/her to a sitting position with feet flat on the floor.
- Stand with your feet shoulder width apart with one foot slightly in front of the other. This provides you with your base to support you and your loved one.
- Bend at the knees, not the waist. Your knees will support you and save your back. Flex your knees and hips when lowering someone into a wheelchair, chair, or bed, using the armrests for support when available.
- Place your arms around the person's waist. Do not have the person put his/her arms around your neck, as that can pull you forward and cause you to lose your balance. If the person feels a need to hold on to something, have him/her put

arms around your waist or on your shoulders.

- Have your loved one lean forward before trying to stand. Use a rocking motion to create momentum, if possible. Let him/her know when you are going to start, e.g. you're going to stand on the count of three. Bring the person as close to your body as you can.
- To swivel someone, use your legs; these muscles are strong and can help you pivot. Do not twist at the waist. Take small steps, keep your back and neck in a straight line.
- Learn to use assistive devices if appropriate, e.g. gait belt, transfer board, draw sheet, Hoyer lift.