

Body Mechanics



PURPOSE: To decrease the chance of muscle, joint and back strain while reducing the risk of injuring the ones you are helping. Body mechanics is a term for the way your body moves to keep its balance during movement and at rest. safety and privacy for an individual using a bedpan.

EQUIPMENT: None

ACTION: For safe lifting:

- Stand so that your weight is centered over your feet. Don't put more weight on one foot than the other.
- Keep your feet about shoulder width apart.
- Don't lock your knees.
- Bend at the knees, not the waist when lifting something that is low.
- Assume the stooping position with one foot slightly in front of the other and your back straight.
- Keep the object close to your body.
- Grasp the object, and tighten your abdominal muscles.
- While lifting, keep your upper body straight and stick your bottom out.
- Lift smoothly using your leg muscles. No jerking.

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Body Mechanics *continued*



ACTION:

Transferring an individual to a chair:

- Explain to the individual what you are going to do.
- Make sure there are no obstacles in your way.
- Make sure the chair is close to the bed to make the distance the shortest possible.
- Keep a secure hold on the individual.
- Tell the individual that on the count of 3 you are going to lift him.
- To lift the individual from the bed, rock back and forth on your feet on each count while gently lifting. Be sure one foot is slightly ahead of the other, as in a walking position.
- Keep the individual close to you so that you are using your large muscles for the work.
- Use smooth and steady movements during a transfer. Jerking may startle and frighten the individual.
- Do not twist your body. Turn your feet first toward the chair and then follow with your shoulders and hips at the same time.
- Lower the individual into the chair by bending your knees and keeping your back straight.

Notes:

- If you hurt your back during work, notify your supervisor.
- Wear sturdy shoes.
- Remember to push, pull or roll heavy objects rather than lifting them whenever possible.
- Get help if you need it!

REFERENCE:

“In the Know”, 2000; 2010 Lippincott Williams & Wilkins, The American Red Cross Good Body Mechanics, 2004