

Caring for your Back

Health and wellness of both you and your loved one is important when doing any task that involves physical effort, like moving from one surface to another or shifting in bed or the wheelchair.

General Considerations

- Allow your loved one to help as much as possible.
- Estimate the patient's weight and mentally practice.
- Make sure that the floor is free of any obstacles or liquids.
- Keep your feet shoulder width apart.
- Keep the person (or object) as close to your body as possible.
- Tighten your stomach muscles.
- Bend knees and hips, and keep your back straight throughout the movement.
- Lift with your legs, NOT your back
- Do not twist your back as you lift. To turn when lifting, pivot your feet.
- Communicate with the patient to allow them to assist if able
- If you have doubts, ASK FOR HELP!

Key Points for Working with Someone in the Bed

- If using a hospital bed adjust bed height to approximately waist height & lower bed rails
- For a regular bed put one knee on the bed to allow you to get closer to the patient and keep your back straight.
- Do not lean over the patient to provide care.
- To roll your loved one, always roll toward, not away from you.
- To make rolling easier, bend the patient's opposite knee (e.g., when rolling to the right, bend the left knee).
- Put your hand behind the opposite shoulder blade. Never pull on the person's arm to roll them, as this can harm the shoulder.
- Put the other hand behind the opposite hip, and gently roll the person towards you. Lean back as you do the movement and don't just pull with your hands.