

# Caring for your Back

## Bed Mobility for Caregivers

### General Considerations

- Allow the patient to help as much as possible.
- Estimate the patient's weight and mentally practice.
- Be 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.
- If you have doubts, ASK FOR HELP!

### Key Points for Body Mechanics during BED MOBILITY

An important time when proper body mechanics can protect both the caregiver and the loved one is when moving the loved one in bed. Some important points to keep in mind are:

- Continue to keep good body mechanics throughout the whole activity. That is, make sure that your back is straight, your knees are bent and you maintain a strong abdominal contraction throughout the activity.
- Adjust bed height to approximately waist height to allow you to stand comfortably with your back straight.
- Lower the bed rails to get as close to the patient as possible to help decrease the stress on your back.
- If you still feel too far away from the patient, put one knee on the bed to get closer, maintaining a straight back throughout.
  - Ensure that the patient is as close to you as possible when providing care or moving them.
- Stagger your feet and shift your weight throughout the movement.
- Reposition your loved one to assist you throughout any movement being performed.
- When moving your loved one in bed, try to avoid reaching over your loved one, as this puts your back at risk for injury.
- To roll your loved one, always roll toward, not away from you. This is safer for both you and the patient.
- To make rolling easier, bend the patient's opposite knee (e.g., when rolling to the right, bend the left knee).
- Put the hand closest to the patient's head behind the opposite shoulder blade. Never use a person's arm to roll them, as this can harm the shoulder.
- Put the hand closest to the patient's feet behind the opposite hip.
- To avoid straining your upper back when rolling the patient, lean back. Do not pull with your arms.