

19. Assistive devices for lifting and transfer

"According to the "Eight Principles of Lifting and Transfer""
when transferring the elder
if resources allow
it's best to use assistive devices
such as an electrical hoist
to reduce the strain on joints of the carer's joints
"No matter what devices you use, they must suit the elder's level of
mobility"
and do encourage them to participate
so that their function would not degenerate so much due to disuse
If you want to assess an elder's mobility and condition
and choose an appropriate way of transfer
consult a physiotherapist
"Before transfer, check the elder's current condition"
"If she has an unhealed bone fracture, dislocated joint"
"or pain, take extra care"
Do not exert force on these areas
"If she has tubing attached, be careful not to pull the tube"
Position the urine bag properly to avoid urine backflow
"In the following, we will demonstrate how to apply"
"the "Eight Principles of Lifting and Transfer" when using an electrical
hoist"
through an example of transferring an elderly person to participate
actively
"Firstly, prepare the chair and tidy up the surroundings"
Remove all obstacles along the path
Make sure the hoist has sufficient power reserve
and is in good working condition
Please note that different hoists may be operated by different methods
"For example, some hoists can be safely operated"
without locking the wheels
"First, raise the bed to the level of the hip joint"
Use the lifting method shown earlier
The carers should keep their back straight and get in a firm stance with
one leg forward
or kneel on the bed. Put one hand on the outside of her pelvis

and the other hand at the back of the shoulder to help her lie on the side
"Similarly, the carers should mind their own postures"
and avoid pulling the shoulders of the elder
When she is lying on the side
roll up and fold the sling and place it underneath her back
Assist her to turn back to supine lying
and propel with the lower limbs to help her turn
Hook the straps so as to suit her posture upon arrival at the destination
"Next, press the electrical hoist to lift her up"
Both arms should be inside the sling
If she cannot cooperate
pay extra care and attention
when lifting so as to prevent injury
When the sling reaches the destination
the carers should operate the hoist to lower the elder
"Finally, release the sling"
It's important that no matter what assistive devices you are using
always maintain a proper posture
That means keep the back straight and tighten up the abdomen
Get as close to the elder as possible
Move the hoist with lower limb strength
and keep the sling stable while transferring
Make sure she does not hit any objects
"In addition, the destination chair or wheelchair"
must be securely positioned against the wall or another stable furniture
"Alternatively, ask another carer to hold the chair or wheelchair firmly"
Remember the lifting and transfer method
"should be based on the ""Eight Principles of Lifting and Transfer"""
Apply them flexibly
according to different situations
If in doubt
consult a physiotherapist
Before using the electrical hoist
the carers must be properly trained
Improper use may cause serious injury to both the carers or the elder
Such electrical hoist should be installed by professionals
"It should be checked, maintained and repaired regularly"
There are different types of electrical hoist with different dimensions

and operation methods

Carers must read and follow instruction manuals

Consult an occupational therapist if there is any query

There are two kinds of electrical hoist :

mobile hoist on the floor or the ceiling hoist

Mobile hoists on the floor requires more space for turning

A suitable size of the sling must be chosen

The loop extension of the sling

can be used according to the conditions of the elder

Every hoist has an emergency stop button

to stop the hoist in an emergency

"Besides, there are assistive devices"

which can help the elder to maintain a correct sitting posture

One of it is the seat cushion

Seat cushions can raise the seat level

so that the elder can stand up easily and

maintain the correct sitting posture

It can also relieve the pressure on the buttocks and prevent bed sores

Put the seat cushion on the chair or wheelchair when sitting

Various kinds of seat cushions are available commercially

Common ones are foam cushions

gel cushions and air flow cushions

Seek advice from an occupational therapist before purchase

Another assistive device is the one-way glide

It can prevent the elder from sliding forwards when seated

It should be used with a chair suitable for the elder

Just put the one-way glide on a chair

and let the elder sit on it

Please note

the one-way glide must be placed according to the direction indicated

There are many other kinds of assistive devices in the market

which can be used to assist elder who are bed-bound or physically weak

Specially designed assistive devices can let the carers work more safely and smoothly and lessen the chance of strain

Seek advice from an occupational therapist before purchase

Bed on castors may be used in residential care settings

Please remember to lock the brakes before any lifting and transfer

Beds with adjustable bed height can help in the transfer process

or caring procedures

Turn slide with cover is commonly used

It makes turning for elder much easier

Place the turn slide with cover under the elder who is lying in bed

"Put head, arms and legs of the elder in right positions before turning"

The carer stands at the bedside

Hold and pull one side of the slide to turn the elder

"If there is no bedrail on the other side, ask another carer to help"
to prevent the elder from falling off the bed

Before lifting and transfer

carers must receive proper skills training

Following the Eight Principles of Lifting and Transfer

and be aware of proper posture to ensure the process is smooth and safe

Patient handling sling is commonly used

It can provide two holds for carers

and let them keep the back straight during lifting and transfer
and lessen the chance of back injury

Put the patient handling sling under the buttocks of the elder

The carer holds the sling tightly

then lifts and transfers the elder to the chair

Another common assistive device is the transfer belt

It provides proper holds for carers

Put a transfer belt of the right size on the waist of the elder

Adjust the belt to fit the body

The carer holds the belt tightly and uses correct lifting
and transfer techniques

then lifts and transfers the elder to the chair

In residential care settings

commode can be used to assist elders in bathing or toileting

There are two kinds of commodes

Bedside fixed commode without castor and mobile commode on castors

To prevent fall on the way to toilet at night

a fixed commode can be placed at the bedside for the elder

Please note the following when using a fixed commode

"Firstly, the commode should be placed near the bed against the wall"

"Secondly, the seat height of the commode should match that"

of the bed to facilitate transfer

The mobile commode has castors

The carer can push the mobile commode for the elder to move from bedroom to bathroom

"When using the mobile commode on castors, obstacles should be removed" "e.g. armrests, footrests"

it should be placed near the bed against the wall

The brakes must be locked before transferring the elder to the commode

"When seated, the armrests and footrests can be put back"

the brakes can be released before pushing the commode

the arms of the elder should be put inside the armrests to avoid injury

There are various kinds of fixed and mobile commodes

Consult an occupational therapist about the correct application before purchase

From the above illustrations you would have learned the basis in looking after a mobility-impaired elder

"For example, I've explained from a physiotherapist's perspective" the principles and approaches of different transfers techniques and how to raise the awareness and improve the safety of both the carers and the elder

I've shown you correct postures and how to protect your back to reduce the risk of injury and unnecessary strain

I've also explained how to assist the elder to use walking aids and wheelchairs so as to improve their mobility and expand their scope of activities and social circle

"If you have any question," including doubts about the correct methods and techniques for lifting or transfer

choosing a walking aid and wheelchair

or assessing the ability or risks of carers the elder or staff who need to lift heavy objects

seek advice from a physiotherapist

"I, an occupational therapist" have explained how to select and use the assistive devices properly to raise the awareness of both carers and the elder on environmental barriers in the home

enhance home safety

and increase the independence of the elder

I have introduced assistive devices for carers working in residential care settings to ease the process of lifting and transfer

reduce the fatigue of carers

lessen the chance of injury and strain to the elder and carers

improve occupational safety and avoid strain to carers

Seek advice from occupational therapist on

the selection and use of the most appropriate assistive devices

"And yes, practice makes perfect"

This is true for every technique or device

Therefore you should practise more

If case of doubt

seek advice from a professional. Never act in haste