

Safe Transfers

Parkinson's can impact on some people's ability to sit, stand or rise from bed independently. This means that the people caring for them may need to help them do these things. However if not done properly, carers risk injuring themselves, particularly their backs, and the person the care for. For example injuries (sprains and/or falls) to both parties often happen when a person is helped to stand from a seated position.

The ACC Patient Handling Guidelines set out some principles that can help keep you safe while assisting another person to move.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

- Never lift – another person is always going to be over the maximum limit a person should lift (about 16 kg). If the person you care for needs to be lifted, you should use a hoist.
- Know your limits – know your own capabilities, which may be much less than the maximum, and don't exceed them.
- Wear the right clothes – make sure your clothing and footwear are appropriate. Clothes should allow free movement and shoes should be non-slip, supportive and stable.
- Do one thing at a time – don't try to do two things at once – for instance, don't try to adjust the person's clothing during the transfer.

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BEFORE YOU MAKE A TRANSFER

- Prepare the environment – position furniture correctly, check route and access ways are clear, and check the destination is available.
- Prepare the person being moved – ensure their clothes and footwear are appropriate for the task, and they have any aids they need. Adjust their clothes, aids and position – for instance, encourage them to lean forward.
- Explain the task and give precise instructions. Use a clear command e.g. "Ready, steady, stand". This is clearer than counting and helps co-ordinate everyone in their moves.

DURING THE TRANSFER

When it comes to the actual transfer there is a safe way to hold your body –

- Stand in a stable position, your feet should be shoulder distance apart, with one leg slightly forward to help you balance. You may need to move your feet to maintain a stable posture.
- Avoid twisting making sure your shoulders and hips stay in line with each other.
- Bend your knees slightly, but maintain your natural spinal curve. Avoid stooping by bending slightly at the hips (bottom out).
- Keep your elbows tucked in and avoid reaching – the further away from the body the load (person you

are helping) is, the greater the potential for harm.

- Tighten abdominal muscles to support your spine.
- Keep your head raised, with your chin tucked in during the movement.
- Move smoothly throughout the technique and avoid fixed holds.

AFTER THE TASK

- Stand up straight to correct your spinal alignment. Hold your chest open, shoulders back and abdominal muscles in so your lower body aligns properly with your upper body.

Physiotherapists and occupational therapists can help you learn more about making safe transfers and preventing injury. They may also be able to advise you on equipment to make moving easier. If you have any concerns or would like more information talk to your Field Officer.

Source: ACC Patient handling guidelines – techniques for safer patient handling



The Congress brings together physicians, scientists, allied health professionals and people living with Parkinson's to share information on a wide range of topics from living with Parkinson's to highly scientific research presentations.

Early bird registrations close on 2 July.

Congratulations to Andy McDowell whose entry for the video competition has made the top 12 shortlist, and to Andrew Johnson who has had an abstract accepted.

Further information about the congress is available at worldpdcongress.org