

Caregiver Assistance News

“Caring for You - Caring for Others”

Area Agency on Aging District 7, Inc.

*Serving Adams, Brown, Gallia, Highland, Jackson, Lawrence,
Pike, Ross, Scioto and Vinton Counties in Ohio*

www.aaa7.org **Helping You Age Better!**

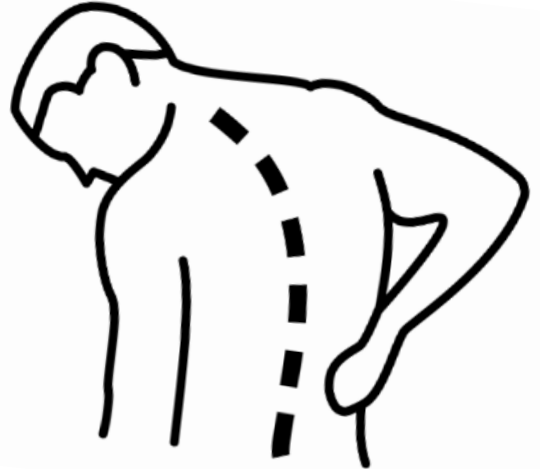


OCTOBER 2024

Back Strain - Lift Carefully

According to the CDC, healthcare workers often experience back strain (musculoskeletal disorders - MSDs) at a rate exceeding that of workers in construction, mining, and manufacturing. The problem of lifting or assisting patients is compounded by the increasing weight of patients to be lifted due to the obesity epidemic in the US, and the rapidly increasing number of older adults who require assistance with the activities of daily living.

To prevent injury, proper body mechanics involves standing and moving one's body to prevent injury, avoid fatigue, and make the best use of strength. When you learn how to control and balance your own body, you can safely control and move another person. Back injuries to family and professional caregivers are common, so when doing any lifting, be sure to use proper body mechanics. Follow these general rules:



- Never lift more than you can comfortably handle.
- Create a base of support by standing with your feet 8–12 inches (shoulder width) apart with one foot a half-step ahead of the other.
- DO NOT let your back do the heavy work—USE YOUR LEGS. (The back muscles are not your strongest muscles.)
- If the bed is low, put one foot on a footstool. This relieves pressure on your lower back.
- Consider using a support belt for your back.

Caregiver Advice for Moving a Person

These pointers are for the caregiver only. Be sure to read the following pages for specific transfer steps.

1. Tell the person what you are going to do.
2. Before starting a move, count with the person, “1-2-3.”
3. To feel in control, get close to the person you are lifting.
4. While lifting, keep your back in a neutral position (arched normally, not stiff), knees bent, and weight balanced on both feet. Tighten your stomach and back muscles to maintain a correct support position.
5. Use your arms to support the person.
6. Again, let your legs do the lifting.

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Moving In and Out of Bed

It is common for an older adult or a person with a disability to have trouble turning over or getting in and out of bed. Transferring a person in and out of bed is an important caregiver activity. It can be done fairly easily if these instructions are followed. Use the same procedure for all transfers so that a routine is set up. These tips may help:

- If the person is having trouble getting in and out of bed or turning over in bed, talk to the health care provider. Medication may have to be adjusted.
- A satin sheet or piece of satin material tucked across the middle of the bed can make it easier for the person to turn over.
- Flannel sheets or heavy blankets make turning over more difficult.
- Make sure the path from the bed to the bathroom is well lit. Use a nightlight or leave open a closet door with the light left on.
- Keep the bedroom floor clear of things that could cause a fall.

Moving a person in bed can injure the person in care or the caregiver if certain basic rules are not followed:

- Never grab or pull the person's arm or leg.
- If the medical condition and bed allow, raise the foot of the bed slightly to prevent the person from sliding down.
- If moving the person is difficult, get them out of bed and back in the wheelchair and start over by moving them in bed closer to the headboard.

Preventing Back Injuries - having the person grab a trapeze bar to help with the move is easiest and safest for your back.

Moving the Person to One Side of the Bed on Their Back

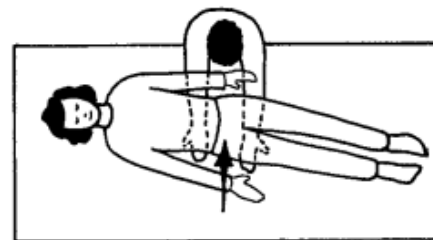
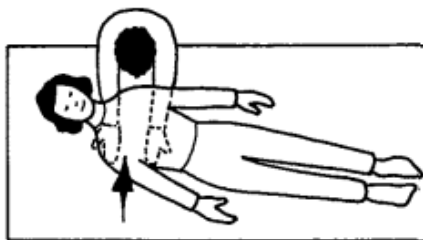
1. Place your feet 8–12 inches apart, knees bent, back in a neutral position.

2. Slide your arms under the person's back to their far shoulder blade. (Bend your knees and hips to lower yourself to the person's level.)

3. Slide the person's shoulders toward you by rocking your weight to your back foot.

4. Use the same procedure at the person's buttocks and feet.

5. Always keep your knees bent and your back in a neutral position.



Taking Care of Yourself

Lighten Your Load

A too heavy handbag can cause muscle soreness, nerve compression, and back and shoulder pain. A bag should weigh no more than 10 percent of your body weight. Weigh your bag on the bathroom scale to make sure you're not putting unnecessary strain on your body. If you have to carry a heavy load on a regular basis, consider a bag with wheels.



To prevent injuries to yourself, get plenty of rest and maintain good nutrition, physical fitness, good body mechanics, and a program for managing stress.

Source: American Chiropractic Association

Back Strain....continued from Page 1

7. Pivot (turn on one foot) instead of twisting your body.
8. Breathe deeply.
9. Keep your shoulders relaxed.
10. When a lot of assistance is needed with transfers, tie a strong belt or a transfer belt around the person's waist and hold it as you complete the transfer.

Memory Care

Transfers

Any time the person with Alzheimer's resists you during a transfer, consider whether the person understands what you want them to do and whether they feel safe. Fear and confusion are often the cause of resistance. During transfers, people may feel more vulnerable and resist out of fear or not knowing where they are going. A skillful, confident approach will go a long way toward cooperation.



1.800.582.7277
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Fall-Free Fridays

AWARD-WINNING

Falls Prevention Education for the Community

Fridays - Fall 2024

10:00 am - LIVE on Facebook

Join us for a new topic each episode!



Why Do Seniors Fall?

- Failure to exercise regularly results in poor muscle tone, decreased bone mass, loss of balance, and reduced flexibility.
- Impaired vision, including age-related vision diseases, as well as not wearing glasses that have been prescribed.
- Medications like sedatives, antidepressants, and anti-psychotic drugs, plus taking multiple medications, increase the risk of falling.
- Health conditions such as Parkinson's, Alzheimer's, and arthritis cause weakness in the extremities, poor grip strength, balance disorders, and cognitive impairment.
- Hip replacements and other surgeries leave an older adult weak, in pain and discomfort, and less mobile than they were before the surgery.
- Environmental hazards such as poor lighting, loose carpets, and lack of safety equipment.



Some content in this publication is excerpted from "The Comfort of Home: Caregivers Series". It is for informational use and not health advice. It is not meant to replace medical care but to supplement it. The publisher assumes no liability with respect to the accuracy, completeness or application of information presented, or the reader's misunderstanding of the text.



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Your local Area Agency on Aging District 7, Inc. serves the following counties in Ohio: Adams, Brown, Gallia, Highland, Jackson, Lawrence, Pike, Ross, Scioto and Vinton. Services are rendered on a non-discriminatory basis. Those interested in learning more about the services provided through the Area Agency on Aging District 7 can call toll-free at 1-800-582-7277. Here, individuals can talk directly with a trained Resource Specialist who will assist them with information surrounding the programs and services that are available to best serve their needs.

The Agency can also be reached via email at info@aaa7.org.