

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!**



APRIL 2013

Back Pain - Lift Carefully

Your automobile and other important equipment work based on mechanical principles. Each part is made to work a certain way and to work with specific other parts. Your body is much the same. Certain parts are for certain activities and perform best when they are used the way they were intended. You have some control over making your individual parts work better and stronger. You also have control over whether or not you use them wisely. The proper use of your body is called Body Mechanics.

Body Mechanics involves standing and moving one's body so as to prevent injury, avoid fatigue, and make the best use of strength. When you learn how to move, control, and balance your own body, you can more easily and safely

control and help or move another person. Back injuries among caregivers are common and many such injuries are preventable.

The following hints will help you use proper body mechanics and be safe:

- Only lift as much as you can comfortably handle.
- Always let the person you are helping know what you are going to do.
- To create a base of support, stand with your feet 8–12 inches apart with one foot a half step ahead of the other.
- Bend your knees slightly.
- Keep your spine in a neutral



(normal arched, not stiff) position while lifting.

- USE YOUR LEGS instead of your back to do most of the work – leg muscles are stronger muscles than your back muscles.
- If you are able to adjust the bed, keep the top at about waist level. If it is low or you are tall, place one foot on a foot stool to relieve pressure on your lower back.

For Less Back Pain...Quit Smoking

A new study found that patients with severe back pain who quit smoking report less pain and greater improvement than patients who continued to smoke. Also, those who continued to smoke during treatment had no improvement in pain. Nicotine increases pain. Another proof that smoking is bad for you - and your back.

Source: *Journal of Bone & Joint Surgery*, December 2012;
American Association of Orthopaedic Surgeons - www.aaos.org



Note - Your Weight Matters

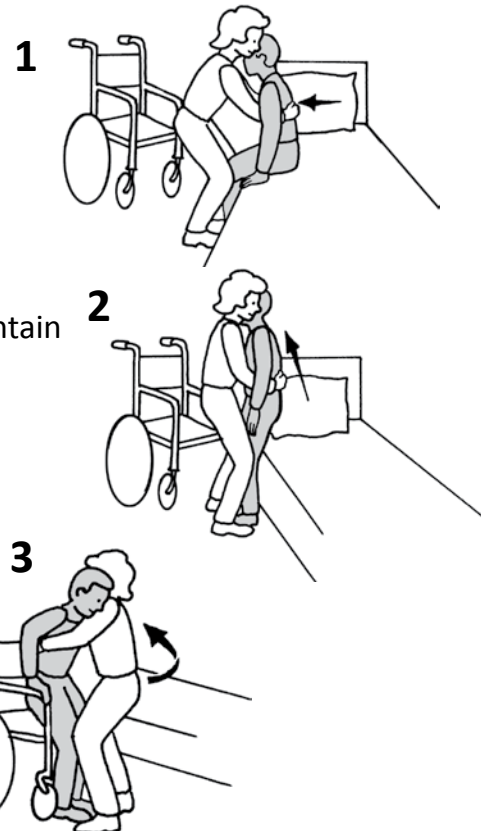
Obesity is one of the biggest risk factors for developing back pain and arthritis because it speeds the destruction of joint-cushioning cartilage. Losing weight - even just 10 or 11 pounds - can cut your risk in half.

Source: *Harvardhealth*

Helpful Caregiver Advice for Moving a Person

These pointers are for the caregiver only. Be sure to receive training with the steps for a specific move or a transfer.

- 1) • Tell the person what you are going to do.
 - Before starting the move, count with the person, "1-2-3."
- 2) • To feel in control, get close to the person you are moving or lifting.
 - Keep your back in a neutral position, knees bent, weight distributed between both feet. Tighten your stomach and back muscles to maintain a correct support position.
 - Use your arms to support the person.
- 3) • Again, let your legs do the lifting.
 - Turn, rather than twist, your body.
 - Breathe deeply.
 - Keep your shoulders relaxed.

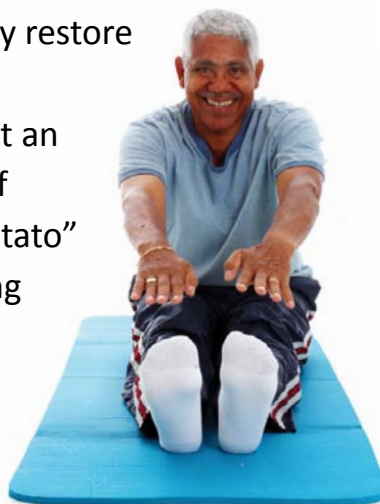


When needing to give a lot of assistance with transfers, tie a strong belt or a transfer belt around the person's waist and hold it as you complete the transfer. In some situations, you may need a lift device, such as a Hoyer lift, to help you.

Don't Fall - Be Safe!

While we do lose muscle as we age, exercise can partially restore strength and flexibility.

It's never too late to start an exercise program. Even if you've been a "couch potato" your whole life, becoming active now will benefit you in many ways - including protection from falls.



Have You Had a Change of Address or Change in Your Phone Number within the Past Few Years?

If so...please contact us to make sure we have your correct and updated information on file.

Please call Vicki Woyan with the AAA7 Caregiver Support Program at 1-800-582-7277, extension 215, or e-mail vwoyan@aaa7.org.



"Nature tops the list of potent tranquilizers and stress reducers. The mere sound of moving water has been shown to lower blood pressure." - Patch Adams

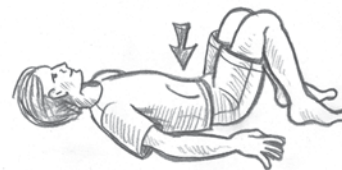
Taking Care of Yourself

Daily Back Strengthening Exercises

Hug Your Knees - Lie on your back with knees bent and soles on the floor. Use your arms to hug one knee at a time to your chest. Ten times each knee.

Flatten Your Back - Lie on your back with knees bent and soles on the floor. Take deep breaths as you tighten your abdominal muscles and press the small of your back into the floor. Hold to a count of 15 as you continue to breathe deeply.

Chest Lift - Lie on your stomach in a relaxed position. Put your hands palms down at chest level and raise your head and chest from the floor. Breathe and hold this position for a count of 25. Gradually increase the time you are able to remain in this position.



Don't expect miracles; these back strengthening exercises will take time to have an effect, but continue them, even after your back feels stronger. And, no matter how strong your back feels, always use proper body mechanics!

Remember to check with your doctor before starting an exercise program.

Upcoming Alzheimer's Association Workshops

Understanding and Dealing with Alzheimer's Disease or Another Dementia



These programs will provide an opportunity for families and caregivers to learn and ask questions about Alzheimer's disease and dementia, while receiving support from others in similar situations. You are invited to attend any or all of the programs listed below. Programs are free of charge. No registration required.

Scioto County - Best Care Nursing and Rehab in Wheelersburg from 2:00 pm - 3:30 pm

Remaining Topics: June 11th - Dealing with Behavioral Challenges • August 13th - Caregiver/Family Stress and Grief
October 8th - Safety Considerations • December 10th - Activities and Interaction

Gallia County - 2881 SR 160 (HMC Thaler Building) in Gallipolis from 1:00 pm - 2:30 pm

Remaining Topics: May 21st - Communication • July 23rd - Dealing with Behavioral Challenges
September 24th - Caregiver/Family Stress and Grief • November 19th - Safety Considerations
January 28, 2014 - Activities and Interaction

What Families Need to Know...When the Diagnosis is Alzheimer's or Related Dementia

This series of educational sessions provides an opportunity for families to learn and share together in an informal setting. Topics are presented by experts in their fields, including physicians, nurses, social workers and attorneys. Session topics include: The Nature and Progression of the Disease, Changes in Communications and Behavior, Legal Planning for Families, and Family Coping Strategies and Community Resources. The two-part series is free of charge, but reservations must be made in advance. Please call the number listed at the bottom of this box.

Adams – August 19 and 26 from 1:00 pm - 4:00 pm at Adams County Regional Medical Center in Seaman

Highland – September 23 and 30 from 5:30 pm - 8:30 pm at Highland District Hospital in Hillsboro

Jackson (for Gallia/Jackson/Vinton Counties) – July 10 and 17 from 12:30 pm - 3:30 pm at Holzer Medical Center - Jackson

Lawrence – May 8 and 15 from 1:00 pm - 4:00 pm at St. Mary's Medical Campus in Ironton

Scioto – August 14 and 21 from 1:00 pm - 4:00 pm at the Vern Riffe Community Center in New Boston

For more information about these programs and other similar programs available in or near your community, or for assistance with registering, please call Melissa Dever, LSW, from the Alzheimer's Association, at (740) 710-1821.



Area Agency on Aging District 7, Inc.

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Website: www.aaa7.org • E-Mail: info@aaa7.org • Facebook: www.facebook.com/AreaAgencyOnAgingDistrict7

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 nurse or social worker 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 e-mail at info@aaa7.org.

Safety Tips - Self-Care for Low Back Pain——

Sometimes, low back pain has an identifiable physical cause, such as a herniated disk, a pinched nerve, or arthritis. But more common is what experts call “nonspecific” low back pain, in which the causes are unknown. Weak muscles in the back and abdomen, as well as a lack of exercise, can be contributing factors, and the risk increases as you become older. Try...



- Ice or heat. Either alone or alternating may help.
- Over-the-counter pain relievers: acetaminophen, aspirin, naproxen or ibuprofen.
- Short walks. Bed rest is not a good idea - it often makes low back pain worse. If the pain keeps you from moving, stay in bed for one or two days at most. Resume activities as soon as possible.
- When you lie down, stay on your side with a pillow between your knees.
- Movement therapies including the Feldenkrais, Pilates, or yoga.

Call your doctor if you are not improving after a few days, or if your pain is severe or radiating. Numbness, tingling, weakness in the limbs, bowel or bladder problems, nausea, fever and vomiting are other signs that you need immediate help.