

# Moving a Consumer from Bed to a Chair/Wheelchair

Follow these steps to move a consumer from bed to a chair or wheelchair. The technique below assumes the consumer can stand on at least one leg. If the consumer cannot use his/her leg, you will need to use a lift to transfer the consumer.

## Preparation

Think through the steps before you act and get help if you need it. If you are not able to support the consumer by yourself, you could injure yourself and the consumer.

Make sure any loose rugs are out of the way to prevent slipping. You may want to put non-skid socks or shoes on the consumer's feet if the consumer needs to step onto a slippery surface.

1. Explain the steps to the consumer.
2. Place the chair/wheelchair on the same side as the consumer's good leg.
3. Place the chair/wheelchair next to the bed, close to you.
4. Put the brakes on the wheelchair and move the footrests out of the way.

## Getting a Consumer Ready to Transfer

Before transferring, the consumer must be sitting.

1. To get the consumer into a seated position, roll the consumer onto the same side as the chair/wheelchair.
2. Allow the consumer to sit for a few moments, in case the consumer feels dizzy when first sitting up.
3. Put one of your arms under the consumer's shoulders and one behind their knees. Bend your knees.
4. Swing their feet off the edge of the bed and use the momentum to help the consumer into a sitting position.
5. Move the consumer to the edge of the bed and lower the bed so that their feet are touching the ground.

## **Pivot Turn**

If you have a gait belt, place it on the consumer to help you get a grip during the transfer. During the turn, the consumer can either hold onto you or reach for the chair/wheelchair.

1. Stand as close as you can to the consumer, reach around their chest, and lock your hands behind the consumer or grab the gait belt.
2. Place the consumer's outside leg (the one farthest from the wheelchair) between your knees for support. Bend your knees and keep your back straight.
3. Count to three and slowly stand up. Use your legs to lift.
4. At the same time, the consumer should place their hands by their sides and help push off the bed.
5. The consumer should help support their weight on their good leg during the transfer.
6. Pivot towards the chair/wheelchair, moving your feet so your back is aligned with your hips.
7. Once the consumer's legs are touching the seat of the chair/wheelchair, bend your knees to lower the consumer into the seat. At the same time, ask the consumer to reach for the chair/wheelchair armrest.

If the consumer starts to fall during the transfer, lower them down to the nearest flat surface, bed, chair or floor.

## **References**

Body mechanics and transfer techniques. In: Mills JE, ed. *Nursing Practices*. 4th ed. Philadelphia, Pa: Lippincott Williams & Wilkins; 2004.

Adapted from "Moving a Patient from Bed to a Wheelchair," U.S. National Library of Medicine. Retrieved from <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/patientinstructions/000428.htm>, October 2013.