

Transferring Tips

When you are caring for an elderly person, particularly one who has great difficulty moving around, you will sometimes have to transfer him or her from place to place. The person may be in a wheelchair and need to be transferred to a bed. Or perhaps she or he uses a walker and needs to be transferred to a car.

Although the specific actions needed will depend on the health conditions and situation at hand, there are general recommendations for moving physically disabled people. Consult with a professional to make sure you are using the proper techniques.

When helping a person using a walker into a vehicle, position the person so that their strongest side or strongest foot is the one with which he or she steps first into the car.



Communicate

Maintain eye contact and communicate verbally with the person you will be transferring. This will make the situation more relaxed, preparing the person for what is to come. It will also give them a chance to communicate any problems or pain. Ask when the person is ready to be moved, and let him or her know what you'll be doing at each stage.



Always keep eye contact and speak to the person you're transferring.

Follow Proper Lifting Techniques

If the transferal involves lifting, it is vital for your safety and the safety of the person you're lifting that you follow proper lifting techniques. Lock the wheels and make sure the pathway is clear. Put your feet 10 to 12 inches apart, with one foot a little ahead of the other. Bend your knees, placing more weight on your front foot. Grasp the person, wrapping your arms around his or her body under his or her arms. As you stand, keep your upper body straight, and when carrying the person, keep him or her close to your body, near your waist. When turning, move your feet; do not twist your back. Lower the person at the proper destination, bending your knees and keeping your upper body straight.

Use the Person's Strengths and Abilities

If the person you're transferring is not completely immobile, your role will be to work with the elder's ability to transfer him or herself. If you don't know already, ask which part of their body is strongest or most able, and then help the person use this to their advantage. For instance, when moving a walker-bound person from a standing position to a seated position in a car, you can position the walker in such a way that the person's strong side or strong foot is the one with which he or she steps first into the car. This procedure can also be useful when moving a person from a seated or standing position into a wheelchair.