

Caregiver Assistance News

“CARING FOR YOU ... CARING FOR OTHERS”

Back Safety & Transfers

Even with Covid spreading in your community, you still may need to take the person in your care out in a car, whether it be for a necessity such as a doctor's appointment or for a drive for pleasure. Being a caregiver puts you at risk for shoulder and back injuries. Many occur when lifting, moving, transferring or changing the position of the one in your care. Improper movements can cause injury to the person being moved, such as abrasions to skin, strains, sprains and tears—even fractures. Learn how to avoid harming yourself *and* the one in your care.

Maintain good posture, and exercise to strengthen your back and stomach muscles. If you are overweight, lose weight. Excess weight puts extra stress on back and stomach muscles and on joints. One pound of extra weight puts four extra pounds of stress on knee joints.

General Rules

First, consider the task at hand. Think about what you are capable of, what assistance you might need and to what degree the one in your care can assist you.

The following rules will help you use proper body mechanics and be safe.

- ✓ Let the person you are helping do as much as he can do *safely*.

- ✓ Never allow the person you are helping to put his arms around your neck.

- ✓ **Always tell the person you are helping what you are going to do.**

- ✓ To create a base of support, stand with your feet 8”–12” (shoulder width) 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 than back muscles.

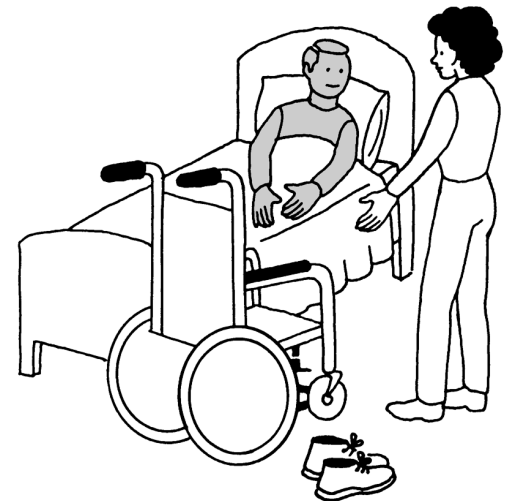
- ✓ When lifting, do not rotate your spine. Shift the position of your feet to turn (pivot).

- ✓ Push or pull an object instead of lifting whenever you can.

- ✓ Know your limits.

TIP

If you're not sure about the proper body mechanics for lifting and transferring, ask a therapist to show you how.



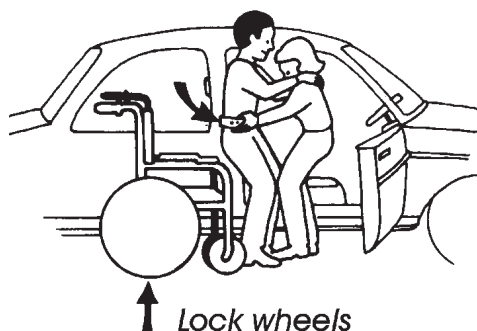
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Transferring from a Wheelchair to a Car

Wear appropriate non-slip footwear, which are safer for both you and the person in your care. Be sure the car is parked on a level surface without cracks or potholes.

1.

- Open the passenger door as far as possible.
- Move the left side of the wheelchair as close to the car seat as possible.
- **Lock the chair's wheels.**
- Move both footrests out of the way.



2.

- Position yourself facing the person.
- Tell him what you are going to do.
- Bending your knees and hips, lower yourself to his level.
- Grasp the transfer belt around his waist to help him stand while straightening your hips and knees.
- If his legs are weak, brace his knees with your knees.

3.

- While he is standing, turn him so he can be eased down to sit on the car seat. **GUIDE HIS HEAD** so it is not bumped.

4.

- Lift his legs into the car by putting your hands under his knees.
- Move him to face the front.
- Put on his seat belt.
- Close door carefully.
- Secure walkers, canes, and similar items. They can become airborne and cause injury during a sudden stop or crash.

For resources for getting in and out of cars, visit <https://dailycaring.com/4-advanced-auto-mobility-aids-help-seniors-get-into-cars/>

NOTE For someone with Alzheimer's, dementia, Parkinson's, stroke, or mobility issues, getting into and out of a car can be even more difficult. It might even take multiple people to help them in and out safely.

Taking Care of Yourself— Make Someone Else Happy

Look for people who are stressed out. When you find them, ask yourself, "How can I relieve their tension?" Since humor comes from tension, focusing on what someone else is frustrated about can often produce laughter.

All you have to do is ask a cashier or salesclerk, for example, "What is the worst thing that has happened to you today?" Suddenly two things occur. One, they get to vent their upset thus getting some immediate relief. And two, they will often laugh when they hear themselves complaining. So the next time you see someone stressed out, keep asking yourself: "How can I relieve the tension?"

Source: *Make Someone Else Happy* by Allen Klein; Allen Klein is an award-winning professional speaker and best-selling author. For more information about Allen's books and programs, visit allenklein.com.



Inspiration

*Count your age by friends, not years.
Count your life by smiles, not tears.*

—John Lennon

Live Life Laughing!

Does anyone know if we can take a shower yet, or do we just have to keep washing our hands?



Memory Care - Balance

Changes in balance and coordination combined with poor memory can make it difficult for a person with Alzheimer's to both get from one place to another and avoid hazardous objects *at the same time*. He may miss a step while looking for a door or trying to listen to someone's conversation.



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Our Purpose

To provide caregivers with critical information enabling them to do their job with confidence, pride, and competence.

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From the publishers of

*Caregiving in
The Comfort of Home®*
Caregiver Series

available from...

CareTrust Publications LLC
PO Box 10283, Portland, OR 97296
800-565-1533
or www.comfortofhome.com

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SAFETY TIPS— Driving and Alzheimer's

There are many reasons that family members are reluctant to acknowledge that the person with dementia should no longer drive. Perhaps no one else is able to drive and no other means of transportation is readily available. They may want to protect the feelings and dignity of the person with the diagnosis of dementia.

Signs that the person is no longer a safe driver—

- ➡ braking often for no apparent reason
- ➡ not paying close attention to the road (traffic signals, road signs, lane markers, other vehicles, cyclists, and pedestrians)
- ➡ not anticipating or reacting quickly and consistently to the actions of other drivers
- ➡ getting angry easily
- ➡ swerving in and out of lanes and getting lost in familiar places
- ➡ dents on car
- ➡ driving too fast or too slow
- ➡ turning around to talk to the person in the back seat and forgetting that he is driving

Source: *The Comfort of Home for Alzheimer's Disease: A Guide for Caregivers*

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“ C A R I N G F O R Y O U ... C A R I N G F O R O T H E R S ”

Q U I C K Q U I Z

Caregivers can easily become injured if not familiar with the proper body mechanics and techniques needed to move the person in their care. Answer True or False to the questions below.

1. Many injuries occur when lifting, moving, transferring or changing the position of the one in your care.
T F
2. Being a caregiver will *not* put you at risk for shoulder and back injuries.
T F
3. First, consider the task at hand. Think about what you are capable of, what assistance you might need and to what degree the one in your care can assist you.
T F
4. Wear appropriate non-slip footwear, which are safer for both you and the person in your care.
T F
5. USE YOUR LEGS instead of your back to do most of the work—leg muscles are stronger than back muscles.
T F
6. Changes in balance and coordination combined with poor memory can make it difficult for a person with AD to both get from one place to another and avoid hazardous objects *at the same time*.
T F
7. A sign that the person may no longer be a safe driver is not paying close attention to the road (traffic signals, lane markers, other vehicles, cyclists, and pedestrians).
T F
8. For someone with Alzheimer's, dementia, Parkinson's, stroke, or mobility issues, getting into and out of a car can be even more difficult.
T F
9. To create a base of support, stand with your feet 8"–12" (shoulder width) apart with one foot a half step ahead of the other.
T F
10. There is no need to secure walkers, canes, and similar items in the car.
T F

Name _____

Signature _____ Date _____