

Pivot Transfer

Many times, it's necessary to assist patients from one position to another, as well as from a bed to a chair/wheelchair. Follow these steps to move a patient from bed to a wheelchair. The step by step technique below assumes that the patient is weight bearing (can stand) on at least one leg. If the patient is not weight-bearing or able to stand on at least one leg, a lift will be necessary to transfer the patient. The following steps are for transferring a patient from a bed to a wheelchair. This transfer technique used is commonly referred to as the Pivot Transfer.

Preparation

For the safety of both the patient and yourself, think through the steps before you act! Do not hesitate to ask for help if you need it. If you are not able to support the patient by yourself, and/or the care plan calls for a two-person transfer, you must get help! Injury and/or disciplinary action may occur if you do not follow protocol accordingly, so remember to think and prepare first!

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 patient's feet for more stability/traction if the patient needs to step onto a slippery surface, or if the patient appears anxious about the transfer.

To transfer a patient from bed to a wheelchair:

1. Explain to the patient that you will be transferring him/her to a wheelchair, why, and that you are there to help him/her do so successfully. Reassure the patient that you will be by his/her side the entire time and will explain everything you are going to do, or what the patient needs to do before doing it.
2. Park the wheelchair next to the bed, close to you.
3. Put the brakes on and move the footrests out of the way.

Ready the Patient for Transfer

Before transferring into the wheelchair, it is necessary for the patient to be in a sitting position. To do this:

1. To get the patient into a seated position, gently roll the patient onto the same side as the wheelchair. Be careful that the patient's arms are not twisted.
2. Put one of your arms under the patient's shoulders and one behind the knees. Bend your knees.
3. Gently, swing the patient's feet off the edge of the bed and use the momentum to help the patient into a sitting position so that he/she is sitting upright.

CTI Medical Assistant Training Program. *Medical Procedures and Policies*; 1990:unit 3

Timby BK. Assisting with basic needs. In: Timby BK, ed. *Fundamentals of nursing skills and concepts*. 10th ed. Philadelphia, PA: Wolters Kluwer Health: Lippincott Williams & Wilkins; 2013:unit 6.

4. Move the patient to the edge of the bed. If the feet are “dangling,” lower the bed so the patient’s feet are touching the ground. Allow the patient to sit for a few moments in case the patient feels dizzy when first sitting up. This is common if the patient has been in reclining position in bed for a while, or has any health issues that would cause him/her to feel that way.

Pivot Turn

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

Stand as close as you can to the patient, reach around the chest, and lock your hands behind the patient or grab the gait belt. Next:

1. Place the patient’s outside leg (the one farthest from the wheelchair) between your knees for support. Bend your knees and keep your back straight. **DO NOT USE YOUR BACK** for momentum – lift with legs!
2. Inform the patient you are going to count to three, and then lift the patient after you say “three.” Then, count to three and slowly stand and begin to lift the patient off the bed and into the wheelchair. Use your legs to lift.
3. At the same time, tell the patient he/she should place their hands by their sides and help push off the bed, supporting their weight on their good leg during the transfer.
4. Pivot towards the wheelchair, moving your feet so your back is aligned with your hips, and encourage the patient to move with you, in a pivoting motion.
5. Once the patient’s legs are touching the seat of the wheelchair, bend your knees to lower the patient into the seat. At the same time, ask the patient to reach for the wheelchair armrest.

If the patient starts to fall during the transfer, gently lower the person to the nearest flat surface, bed, chair or floor, and call for assistance.