

Body Mechanics for Providers

The most important thing to lifting safely is the right kind of equipment, but proper body mechanics is helpful too. Using the body mechanics tips below can help you lift more safely, even if you're using some kind of lifting or transfer device.

Wide Base of Support

Stand with your feet 8-12" (shoulder width apart) with one foot a half step ahead of the other. You will then be able to move the client or object by using a weight shift rather than a dead lift.

Bend Knees

Bending your knees rather than your back makes the legs do the work instead of your back.

Keep Your Back Straight

Keeping your back straight or maintaining its natural curve minimizes the risk of injury. Muscles that support your back work optimally in this position.

Bring Weight Close to Your Body

A heavy object that is held close to your body is easier to carry. There is less load on your back and less stress on your back muscles.

Lift With Your Legs

The muscles of your legs are stronger than your back and should be used for lifting.

Adjust the height of the bed when possible. If the client is in a hospital bed, raise the bed to the best height so that stress on your back is minimized when assisting with transfers, dressing, toileting, positioning, or range of motion exercises.

To Turn, Move Your Feet

If you turn without moving your feet, you are twisting your back. This causes wear and tear on your discs, which can raise the risk of injury.

Source: *"Body Mechanics-Positioning, Moving and Transfers"* The Comfort of Home.