

SECTION THREE

FACTSHEET

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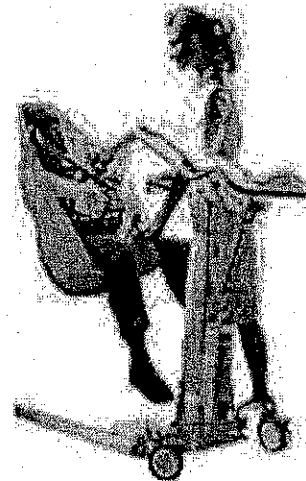
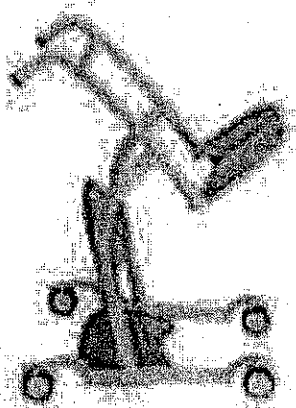
Lifting Solutions

As a home care worker, you often must work alone and lift or move clients by yourself, which could lead to a back injury. However, there is a lot of equipment available, called "durable medical equipment" that can help you avoid injury on the job and also make getting around easier for your client. Some of this equipment has been developed for the home to be more portable and to fit in the bedroom. These devices include:

- ✦ **Lifting equipment**—to help people get in and out of bed, or in and out of the bathtub, or to walk with the aid of a lift.
- ✦ **Shower chairs**—that can be used to wheel the client over the toilet and into certain kinds of showers.
- ✦ **Wheelchairs**—with removable armrests and footrests to make it easier to lift the client.
- ✦ **Transfer benches**—to transfer in and out of the bath more easily.

Most durable medical equipment is covered free of charge under your client's Medi-Cal coverage, but they need to ask either their doctor for a prescription or explain their need to a social worker.

Here are some photos of a few kinds of lifting and transfer devices:





Body Mechanics for Home Care Workers

The most important thing to lift 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.