



## Supporting people to move at home

Practical tips and techniques for carers and support workers



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Association



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## Acknowledgements

This brochure was an innovation initiative between Home and Community Health Association (HCHA) and Carers NZ, funded by ACC.

Thanks to our models, Service Users: **Phyllis, Brendyn and Jess**, Carers: **Lynette and Maxine**.

Thanks to **Enliven Presbyterian Support Northern** and **Careerforce** for their excellent assistance.

Thanks to the Working and Governance Groups: **Julie Haggie, Laurie Hilsgen, Sandie Waddell, Vanessa Russell, Judy Steel, Lynda Blake, Ann Newsom and Fiona Mann**. Thanks to **Fiona Mann** for being the onsite moving and handling expert. Thanks also to our project coordinator **Fiona McDonald-Bates** and photographer **Brendon O'Hagan**.

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## Using this guide

### Are you a family carer or a support worker?

Here are some tips and techniques to use when helping people to move at home.

### The tips don't cover every situation

Expert advice and proper risk assessment are best. There are many situations (like paralysis, spinal injury or dementia) where the carer will need expert training.

### If you are worried about your own safety

or the safety of the person you care for, ask a physiotherapist, occupational therapist or nurse for help and advice. If you are a paid carer talk to your employer.

### Supporting people to move is a two way process

Always ask the person what they prefer or need when they are being helped to move. Are there ways they like to be held? Do they feel any pain or discomfort?

Every person is different. The tips and techniques in this brochure may not be safe or correct for people with some disabilities or conditions. If people do not get the correct support, they or you could fall or get injured. If a person has a care plan it should have information about how they should be helped to move around. If you are not sure, ask for advice from an occupational therapist, physiotherapist or nurse.

## Equipment is often very useful, but

each person's situation is different and you should ask for expert help about the best equipment to use. Experts include occupational therapists or physiotherapists.

### Use it or lose it!

We need to use our muscles, or we will lose strength. Encourage the person you are helping to do as much as they can themselves. It may take a bit longer than if you did things for them, so be patient. But you need to be sure that it is safe for them to do the activities themselves. It may be that they need to keep a part of their body still until it recovers.

### If the person is struggling to move even with help

encourage them to have a needs assessment which can be organised by contacting the local assessment agency. See page 34 of this brochure.





# Taking care of your body

There are things you can do to take safe care of yourself and the person you support. When you help others to move, your body might have to do a lot of work, so:



**Don't** twist your back in a way that is not comfortable. That is a common cause of injury.

**Don't** move in a way that is awkward, especially if you are pushing, pulling or moving. That will add a lot of stress on your muscles.

**Don't** pull the person under the arm.

**Don't** use your arm to pull them up.



**Do** bend your knees slightly.

**Do** keep your natural spinal curve.

**Do** tighten your tummy to help support your spine.

**Do** keep your elbows tucked in.

**Do** move smoothly.

ACC provides a range of information at its website:  
[www.acc.co.nz/preventing-injuries/at-work](http://www.acc.co.nz/preventing-injuries/at-work)



**Base of Support** Make a good base of support for your body by placing your feet wide apart.

You could learn the lunge technique which encourages your body to use its strongest parts to move. This will make it less likely that you will get injured. Ask for professional training to learn this technique.

## If you feel pain or discomfort

If you are hurt or strain yourself, stop what you are doing. Speak to your employer (if you are a support worker) or seek medical advice. Make sure that you note down what happened. It is important to deal with discomfort and pain early. That will help you recover, and will help prevent another injury.

## Planning is important

Think about the person who you are supporting to move



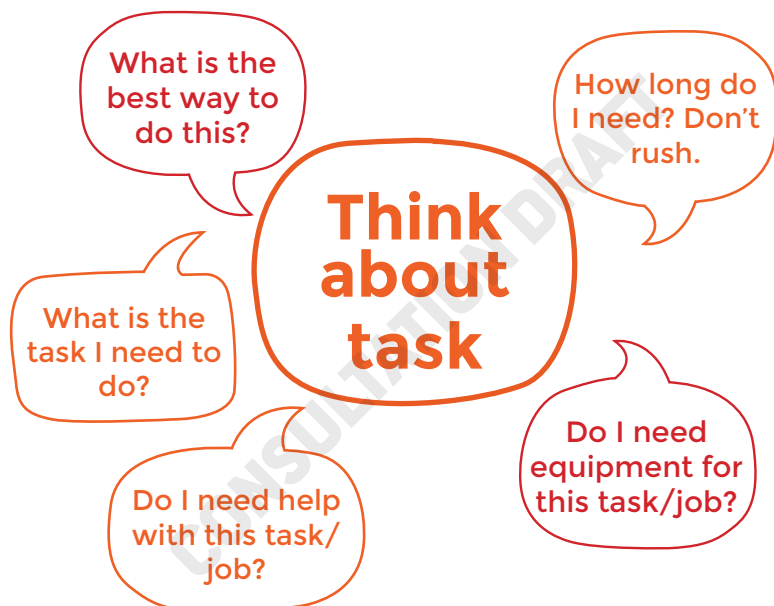
## Planning is important

Think about yourself



## Planning is important

Think about the job that has to be done



## Planning is important

Think about the place where the move will happen





## Communicating

It is important to talk with the person before you start. This will help them to be ready to work with you. It will help you both to feel safer and OK about the move.



Encourage them to tell you what feels comfortable and what does not work. Getting help to move can be scary if we are not used to it. If people are not ready it can result in injury and pain.

- » If the person has a moving and handling plan, make sure you follow it.
- » Ask if they are ready to move.
- » Tell the person what you plan to do to assist them. Ask them how they feel about your plan. Do they have suggestions, questions or other needs?
- » Explain any aids or equipment that will be used.
- » Tell them what they need to do.

It is helpful if you both understand the normal order of a move before you start. This will help you work together. It might be that you will coach the person in their movement. Or they may say what works for them. Then you can work together to make sure that the move goes well and is safe for both of you.

## Communication tips during a moving task:

- » Tell the person to **look in the direction of the move**. This helps the movement.
- » Use words like **ready...steady...stand** or other action words like **sit up** or **roll** or **slide**.
- » Speak **slowly, clearly and simply**.
- » Talk at **eye level** to the person. Don't stand over them.
- » **Be sure you can be heard**, for example if they have a hearing aid, check it is in place. Where a person has poor hearing you may need to get their attention first, and perhaps use hand gestures. If background noise is a problem for them or for you, then reduce it.
- » **Talk clearly** with the person about what you are going to do together, where you're going and what direction you are going in. Where a person has poor sight you may need to give more explanations during the moving action.
- » **Do not rush**. Give the person time to respond, and work at their pace.
- » **Listen** to them and **hear** what they want.
- » **Where a person has poor speech or where there is a language barrier** you may need to allow more time. Again, get rid of background noises. Use tools like a message board. Watch for body language.
- » **If you are a paid support worker** contact your employer if you think you need an interpreter to assist.

# Movement Tips And Techniques

In the following pages you will learn about supporting a person to walk, supporting them during standing and sitting and supporting them to roll over or move up in bed. There are also some tips on helping someone in the bathroom, and moving in and out of a car.

## Walking

Non-slip footwear is important for both the person and the carer.



- » Take small steps. Walk slowly. Do not rush.
- » If possible, walk alongside the person rather than in front of or behind them.
- » If the person's body has been made weak by a stroke or injury, walk on the person's weaker side.



## Steps and stairs

Rails on each side of steps and stairs are very helpful.

Pay special attention to the bottom step. A lot of falls happen when people miss that step.

If the person has one weaker leg:  
Going up put the good leg up first.  
Going down put the weaker leg first.

Put the lights on!  
Poor lighting is a common cause of falls on stairs and steps.

Sometimes, especially from vans, it is safer for the person to come down backwards (like coming down a ladder).

For uneven surfaces, like steps, think ahead. Warn the person: "We are coming up to a small step here. You will need to lift your foot higher."

## Narrow spaces

Plan ahead. Are the doors wide enough for you to assist the person?

Move items that might make the move more difficult.

If the bathroom is too narrow to move safely, think about using a wheeled shower chair instead.

If a narrow space makes you lean on an awkward angle, you should report it to your manager if you are employed as a support worker. If you are a family carer seek help from an occupational therapist. Equipment or house alterations may be needed.

### Helpful equipment for walking:

Walking frames, transfer or handling belts, walking stick, crutches, hand rails.



## Sitting to Standing

To move easily from sitting to standing the person who is being helped must be able to place their feet firmly on the ground.

The right seating makes standing easier. Standing from a chair is easier if the size of the chair suits the person. The best position for a person getting ready to move is when their feet are flat on the floor and their hip is at a right angle to their knee.

- » It is best if the chair has armrests, If there are no armrests, push down on the edge of the chair.
- » Coach the person to stand. Tell them to lean forward and move to the front of the seat. The person's upper body should be above the top of their knees, with their feet as wide as their hips.
- » Tell them to look ahead.
- » Use instructions like 'ready, steady, stand' and get the person to rock gently forward on each word. Or, gently rock the person backwards and forwards to build up momentum.



**DO NOT** hook the person under their armpits, this is dangerous and could cause injury.

**DO NOT** pull the person towards you. This may put both of you off balance.

**DO NOT** allow the person to hold you around your neck when standing, sitting or moving.

**DO NOT** pull the person by their arm.



1. Person has hands on armrests and looking straight ahead.
2. Carer stands with inside arm on person's hip.
3. Ask person to lean forward so upper body is above knees.
4. Rock forward with person, on 'ready, steady, stand'.
5. Person stands.

If it is really difficult for a person to stand even with support, they probably need a further assessment.

### Helpful equipment for standing movements:

Chair raisers, over the toilet frames, slide sheets, perching stool, walking stick, crutches.

There are ACC videos that show the sit to stand movement. They show one carer helping just with their voice, and another giving physical help:

[www.acc.co.nz/preventing-injuries/at-work/industry-specific-safety/moving-and-handling-people-nz-guidelines/index.htm](http://www.acc.co.nz/preventing-injuries/at-work/industry-specific-safety/moving-and-handling-people-nz-guidelines/index.htm)

## Standing to Sitting

Have the person stand with the back of their legs against the chair or edge of the bed.

Ask them to keep their head up, to lean forward slightly and place their hands on the chair armrests or on the edge of the chair or bed. Tell them to slowly sit down with their bottom as far back in the chair or on the bed as possible. The person then needs to straighten up, and maybe adjust to get comfortable.



## Moving from one seat to another seat

1. Person leans forward and slides their bottom to front of chair.
2. Person puts their leading foot in the direction they are going.
3. Person reaches over and takes far arm of the other chair.
4. Person pushes up through their arms and legs.
5. Person transfers to other chair.
6. Person lowers themselves into chair.

## Moving from one seat to another using a walking frame

If a person is less able to move, a walking frame or other equipment might be useful, but they should be assessed first.

1. With person sitting forward in chair, carer rocks forward with 'ready, steady, stand'.
2. Person stands and moves hands to walking frame.
3. Person holds onto walking frame, guided by carer.
4. Person moves around to the other chair whilst holding onto the walking frame.
5. Person gets ready in front of chair.
6. Person sits down, first placing hands on armrests.



## Transfer boards

A small transfer board can be used to bridge the gaps between seats that are next to each other (for example, from bed or chair to wheelchair; from wheelchair to toilet or car). If possible, ensure the seat that the person is moving onto is slightly lower than the seat where they start from. This makes it easier for the person to move.



These boards can be straight or curved. Curved transfer boards make it easier to move around fixed armrests. There are also sit-stand turners that are useful when there is only one carer.



## Rolling over in Bed

### Rolling over in bed – without support

1. Ask the person to turn their head in the direction of the roll.
2. Person bends their outside knee.
3. Person puts their outside arm across their chest in the direction of the roll.
4. Person rolls over, pushing with outside foot and reaching across their body.
5. Person completes roll.



#### People with strokes and paralysis

Where a person has partial or more serious paralysis they will have quite different movement needs in bed. That will need assessment and training. There is some information online, such as videos for informal carers of people with strokes:

[www.stroke4carers.org](http://www.stroke4carers.org) or [www.stroke.org.nz](http://www.stroke.org.nz)

### Rolling over in bed with carer support

When supporting someone to roll over in bed, the best height of the bed is around the carer's hip level.

If the bed is too low, bend your knees or put your knee on the bed. Seek help if the bed is too high.

1. Person crosses arms.
2. Person bends outside knee.
3. Place your hands on the person's shoulder and hip, to help with the roll.
4. Always roll the person towards you.

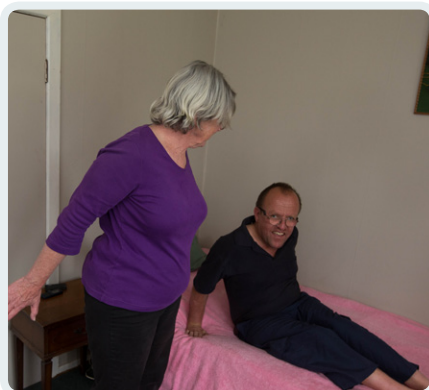


**Slide sheets are also useful aids**, but you need to learn to use them properly and safely

## Moving up and sitting up in bed

### Sitting up in bed

1. Ask the person to raise their head.
2. Person places both hands flat on the bed and raises the top half of their body using their arms.
3. Person pushes up from the bed using arms.
4. Person holds themselves in an upright position.



### Moving up the bed

To move up the bed, the person should bend their knees and dig their heels into the bed to push up the bed.

### Sitting to edge of bed

1. The person pushes with their legs and turns onto their side facing the carer.
2. Person puts legs over the edge of the bed.
3. Person uses hand and elbow to push up while lowering legs to the floor.
4. Person is sitting on the edge of the bed.



#### Helpful equipment for bedrooms:

Bed raisers, overhead pole or monkey bar, bed ladder, bed loops or levers, over-bed tables, slide sheet.



## Moving in bathrooms and dressing

Communication and working together are more important in these tasks because they are so personal to the person being assisted and to you.

If there are wet and slippery surfaces, carers should plan how to reduce the risk of slips and falls. You need to do this for yourself and for the person you are assisting. This may include the use of non-slip bath mats, or shower stools to help reduce the risk.

### Hand washing - hygiene

Wash your hands carefully before and after you assist a person with bathing, toileting and dressing.



## Moving in the bathroom or shower

- » Take anything out of the room that might cause either of you to trip or get injured.
- » Get as close to shower or bath as possible. Do not overstretch.
- » Have clothing and towels set up and handy in the bathroom.
- » Make sure the water is the correct temperature – get the person to test it if they can do that safely.
- » Good lighting is very important.
- » Having a warm room is also important, as we can tense up if we are cold.

## Moving on and off toilets

Toilets are often in a small space which makes it difficult to move on and off them. If the person you are helping always finds it difficult to get on or off the toilet they should ask their doctor or the needs assessment agency for help. They may be able to get a referral for an occupational therapy or physiotherapy assessment. They may be able to get some funding to make the room easier to move in.

1. Those who use a walking frame should take steady steps up to the toilet, then small steps around so the backs of their legs are against the toilet. They should not back into the toilet from the start of the action, as they have less control.
2. They then release the walking frame.
3. They then use the hand rails or a toilet frame, or your assistance to control their descent.
4. When they stand, they should not pull on their walking frame as they have less control. They should use their arms to push themselves upwards, or use hand rails if these are available.

### Bedside commode

If there is not enough room in the toilet to assist a person, or if the actions above are too difficult, it may be safer to use a bedside commode. It is best to use one that can be adjusted to the person's height.

### Helpful equipment for bathing, showering or toileting:

Over the toilet frame, raised toilet seat, commode, perching stool, shower chair, transfer bench, bath board, non-slip mat, grab bars and hand rails.



## Moving in and out of cars

Look at the ACC DVDs on moving in and out of cars go to [www.acc.co.nz](http://www.acc.co.nz) then search for Moving and Handling Guidelines.

### Moving from a car to a walking frame or wheelchair

1. Place a scrunched up slide sheet or plastic shopping bag under the person's bottom. This reduces friction when swiveling in/out of a car.
2. Ask the person to lift their legs out of the car.
3. Ask them to move forward until their feet are flat on the ground.



#### Where to place the walking frame and wheelchair

Note the difference between where the walking frame is and where the wheelchair is. The walker is put in front of the person. The wheelchair is placed at right angles to the person.

### Moving to a walking frame

4. Place the walking frame in front of the person.
5. The person then leans forward and stands up, pushing up from the seat.
6. The person moves their hands to walking frame.



### Or moving to a wheelchair

4. Place the wheelchair parallel to the car at a right angle to the person.
5. Person leans forward, puts their hand on the wheelchair arm and stands up.
6. If the person is not able to bear their weight then a transfer board can be used between the car and the wheelchair.





## Helping someone who has fallen

When a person has fallen, check for anything that may be an immediate danger to them (eg a heater close by, or a hot cup of tea on a table).

In most cases where a person falls, they will be able to talk to you. Ask the person if they are having any trouble breathing or if anything hurts.

If the person seems unwell or injured, call for medical assistance immediately. If you are on your own with the person and there is no one around to help, call 111 or use the person's medical alarm.

If there is not some other emergency, it may be best for the person to stay on the floor to recover and get over the shock. Cover them with a blanket to keep them warm.

A person who appears to be uninjured may be able to get themselves up with your encouragement and assistance. Crawling to a chair or stairs gives the person something to push on to raise themselves up.

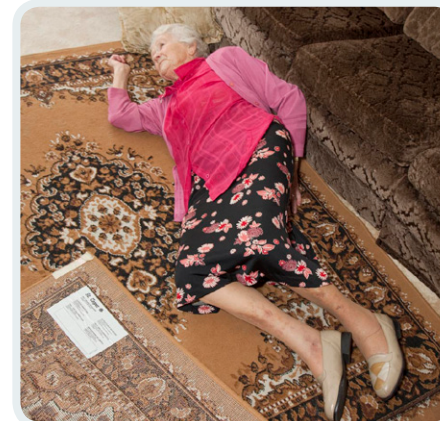
Stop immediately if the person feels unable to move, dizzy or if pain gets worse. In that case help them into a comfortable position and call for help.



**DO NOT** try to catch a person who is falling. You are more likely to cause harm to yourself or the person.

**DO NOT** try to lift the person's weight from where they have fallen because you are very likely to injure your back by doing so.

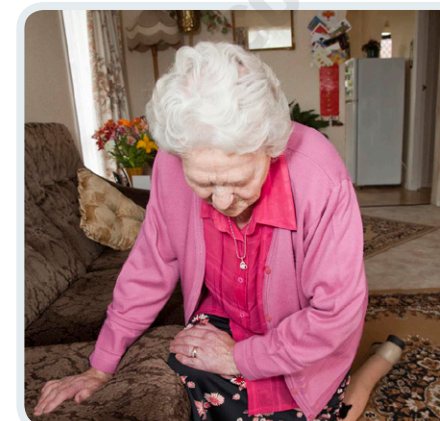
## Tips for helping someone to get themselves up if they have fallen



**Figure 1.** Roll onto one side, then push up on one arm to a side sitting position.



**Figure 2.** Move onto hands and knees and crawl to a stair or chairs



**Figure 3.** Put closest hand on the chair and bring outside leg up



**Figure 4.** Pivot body around to sit on the chair

## Equipment Tips And Information

### Loading a standard wheelchair into a car

- » Fold the wheelchair by pulling up on the seat after first taking off the cushion and folding the footplates.
- » Hold the handles firmly and also the front pieces of the chair, being careful to make sure the brakes are on. Lift the chair onto the edge of the boot or door and slide the chair in, keeping your back straight and bending your hips and knees.
- » If you are finding it too heavy, look at using equipment that can help to lift the wheelchair into the car or a rack (like a bicycle rack) that can be fitted to the back of the car.

### Pushing a wheelchair down a kerb

- » Turn the back of the chair to the kerb and lower the back wheels down. This uses gravity to help and is not as stressful on your body.
- » For wheelchairs with tilt bars put your foot on the tipping lever.
- » Take hold of the hand grips (make sure they are fitting firmly).
- » Gently lower the chair down.



### Pushing a wheelchair up a kerb

- » Put your foot on tipping lever and raise the front wheels, before moving them onto the kerb.
- » Once the front wheels are up on the kerb, use the back wheels on the kerb to make a rolling up movement rather than a lifting movement.



**Always** put the wheelchair brakes on before the person sits down or stands up.

**Always** fold the foot plates away before the person stands up or sits down.



## Walking Frame

- » If the frame has brakes they should be put on before the person stands up.
- » When a person is standing upright and holding their frame their shoulders should be relaxed, and the elbows should be slightly bent.
- » To move from a sitting position to a walking frame the person should push forward and up on the armrests of the chair. They should not use the frame to pull themselves up.



## Hoists and other equipment

There is useful information on hoists and other equipment in the Moving and Handling Guidelines. This is available online at the ACC website. The Guideline explains that there are three types of hoists – floor hoists, standing hoists and ceiling hoists. All hoists use slings to hold the person being moved.

All carers should be trained in fitting slings and in the proper use of hoists, and should know how to work the model of hoist that they are using. Hoists and other equipment should be regularly maintained.

## Where can people get equipment?

Each person's situation is different. Expert help should be sought about the best equipment to use. A doctor, needs assessment agency or ACC case manager can organise an assessment for the person who is getting support. If the assessment shows that the person needs equipment, then the assessment agency will tell them how to get the equipment. If a person can't get equipment through a government agency then they should contact their local Disability Resource Centre for advice.

## After the move – think and plan again

Could anything be done better next time? Are you OK?

Is the person feeling safe and comfortable? Ask them if they would like anything more or different.

If you notice anything unusual or different about the person during or after the move, make sure that they either seek medical help or talk to someone who can help, for example, an occupational therapist or physiotherapist.

If you are leaving the person after the move, leave everyday things close enough so they can reach them: their phone, medications, medical alarm, drink, blankets or 'nana rugs', TV remote control, magazines or books, tissue box, walking stick, walker.



## More advice for family carers

**Carers:** [www.carersair.net.nz](http://www.carersair.net.nz)

Carers NZ exists to support our country's family, whanau, and aiga carers. Carers NZ provide; opportunities for carers to get together, information, free newsletters, advice and learning, special offers and more.

Carers NZ have injury prevention and safety resources available via their website.

**ACC:** [www.acc.co.nz](http://www.acc.co.nz)

The ACC website has lots of helpful advice, videos and other resources on moving and handling tasks. The 2012 ACC Moving and Handling People – the New Zealand Guidelines are available on the website. Go to the website and search for Moving and Handling Guidelines to access these.

**HCHA:** [www.hcha.org.nz](http://www.hcha.org.nz)

Home and Community Health Association represents providers of home and community health services in New Zealand. An online copy of this brochure is available on their website.

## Needs Assessment Contacts

**People under 65 living with a disability**

[www.moh.govt.nz](http://www.moh.govt.nz)

search for disability support services, then look for needs assessment

**People over 65**

[www.moh.govt.nz](http://www.moh.govt.nz)

search for health of older people, then needs assessment

**For people living with an injury**

[www.acc.co.nz](http://www.acc.co.nz)

search for serious injury/disability how ACC can help you.