

Floor to Wheelchair Transfer

Almost every wheelchair user will fall from their chair at some point. Getting back on your chair is one of the most difficult transfers. With practice, you can do it alone or with the help of an assistant. Always practice transfers with a therapist before trying them alone.

Safety First

Falling can lead to injuries. You may not feel hurt if you don't have sensation. Before trying to transfer, see if you are injured. Look at your legs and find out if they are in a normal position.

If you are seriously injured, do not move as this might make the injury worse. Call for help with your cellphone or instruct any bystanders to call an ambulance.

If you are not seriously injured, you will need to get back into your wheelchair. If possible get someone to help you. It is easier with an assistant but can be done alone.

Floor to chair transfer procedure

1. Remove your seatbelt and move out of your chair.
2. Place your chair upright with the footrests angled towards a side of your body. Put the brakes on.
3. Pull the cushion off of your seat. Place it in front of your footrests if possible.
4. Sit on the cushion. Put your legs straight out in front of you. Some people prefer to have one leg bent.
5. Get a firm grip on the chair frame with one hand.
6. Place the other hand flat on the floor or on your cushion near your hips. This is the 'ready position'.
7. Swinging your head and trunk up and down a few times before lifting can help. As you do this, count '1, 2, 3, LIFT'.



Tip: Check out YouTube for transfer videos. Some can be quite helpful!

Contact your Physiotherapist for more information.

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8. Push up with both hands but use mainly the hand on the floor. As you are pushing, bend your trunk towards the hand on the floor.
9. Lift your hips onto the edge of the seat first. Still in this posture, move as far back in the seat as you can.
10. Swing your hand from the floor to the frame of the chair.
11. Keep your hands in front of your hips. Reaching too far behind can cause you to slide off of the seat.
12. Lift and push to slide your hips back.
13. Pick up your cushion and find a place to transfer out of the chair. Replace the cushion.
14. Once back on your chair, check your skin more carefully. Look for scrapes, swelling, bruising, etc. If you notice anything unusual contact your doctor.



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Transferring with assistance

Having help can make a floor to chair transfer much safer. Make sure your helpers have the right instructions to help you.

1. They should squat behind you, beside the chair.
2. They should place their hands under your hips or on the back of your belt or pants. They should not grab your under your arms or shoulders.
3. Instruct them to lift with their legs and guide your hips onto the chair.
4. Once on the seat, they can move behind the chair and help you to pull your hips all the way back.

Tip: When you and your helper are ready to transfer, count “1, 2, 3, LIFT!”



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