

Transferring with a Lift

A lift is often used to transfer people with limited movement from one surface to another. This handout gives general guidelines on how to use a lift. Always use instructions from your lift's manual for proper operation. Practice transfers with a therapist before trying it with your assistants.

Getting Ready

It's best if two people assist with the transfer. It can be helpful to do a trial run with an empty sling the first time. Check the base of the lift to make sure it can fit around the wheelchair. Before starting, make sure that the space is clear. If you are transferring to a wheelchair, put the chair's brakes on. Place the wheelchair in a tilted position if possible. Swing foot rests away and turn the chair's power off.

Before starting, check the equipment to be sure the lift and sling are working well.

Using the Lift with a Divided Leg Sling

1. With the person to be transferred in bed, position yourself and the other assistant on either side. Help the person roll onto one side by guiding their hip and shoulder. With the sling rolled half way, place the rolled part of it under the patient. The side of the sling without handles should be against their body. Help the person roll onto their other side. Position the sling by unrolling it. Help the person get back onto their back. The centre seam of the sling should be in the middle of the person's back.
2. Cross the leg straps between the patient's legs and attach the straps to the spreader bar. Crossing the leg straps is a safety feature of the divided leg sling. Lift the legs as you position the straps to protect the skin.
3. Attach the sling's shoulder loops to the spreader bar. The shorter loops should be used when moving to a chair. This gives a more upright position. Longer loops are used when moving to a bed.
4. One assistant should operate the lift's controls while the other guides the legs. Slowly raise the person with the lift. Make sure their hands are not getting caught in the straps and that their head is safe.

Contact your Physiotherapist or Nurse for more information.

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5. Move the person to the wheelchair using the handles on the lift. Lower the person into the chair. As the person is lowered, one assistant pulls back on the sling. The other assistant pushes on the knees. This helps the person get as close to the back of the chair as possible. As you lower the person, watch their head to make sure it stays away from the lift.
6. Once the person is in a sitting position, take the straps off of the spreader bar. One assistant can lift a leg as the other removes the strap. Remove the sling gently. Pulling the sling out quickly can cause injury to the person's skin. Lean the person to one side while the lower part of the sling is moved away. Repeat this step on the other side. To remove the sling, lean the patient forward and remove the sling from behind their back.
7. Un-tilt the wheelchair, adjust clothing, and secure the seat belt.

AFTER COMPLETING THE TRANSFER:

- If your lift is battery or electrically powered, make sure you plug it in after use.
- Store the lift with the brakes on.



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