

## **Module 2**

### **BACK INJURY PREVENTION**

- Fitness
- Posture Correction
- Body Mechanics
- Transferring/Lifting Clients
- Moving a Client Safely
- Assisting the Walking Client
- The Aggressive Client
- Environmental Considerations
- Improve the way you work

## BACK INJURY PREVENTION PROGRAM (BIPP)

**Any questions concerning Back Injury Prevention please contact the Office Manager or Designate at your local office.**

### Fitness

The following stretches are recommended for all Home Support Workers to use prior to the start of their shift. This will warm and stretch muscles and reduce the risk of injury.



### Posture

**Good Posture is important to prevent undue strain and tension to the muscles, joints and bones and to prevent deformity.**

**Become "Posture Aware" by correcting your posture several times a day, so that eventually, good posture will become habitual.**

Front View (Check your posture in front of a mirror)

- Head in the middle
- Eyes Level
- Shoulders Level
- Hip bones Level
- Weight even on both legs
- Knees straight, but not locked
- Heels flat, toes pointed forward.

Side View

- Check posture by standing close to a wall with back of shoulders and buttock touching the wall

<b>Posture Correction</b>	
<b>Poor Posture</b>	<b>Good Posture</b>
✗ Stoopd Neck	✓ Head High
✗ Tilted Pelvis	✓ Chin tucked in so that back of head is slightly away from the wall
✗ Sway Back (too large of an inward curve in the lower back)	✓ Tips of ears over the shoulders (shrug shoulders up & around and let them fall, relaxed to your side)
✗ Protruding Stomach	✓ "Hand space" hollow between the lower back and wall
✗ Bent Knees	✓ Knees straight, heels flat

**Body Mechanics**

**Precautions**

- Avoid shoulder injury to client – do not grasp the client under the armpits
- Avoid neck injury – do not permit the client to hold you around the neck
- Avoid back injury – move the whole body in the direction of the transfer/lift
- Protect the spine from injury during the lift. Tighten the abdominal muscles.

Good Body Mechanics	
Don't	Do
✘ Twist your back	✓ Use large muscles for the body
✘ Work with the weight at arm's-length and height	✓ Keep objects close to the body and have working surface at elbow height
✘ Bend from the waist	✓ Keep back straight with shoulder and pelvis level

**Note: wide base of support with feet shoulder width apart (12-18 inches)**



### Instructions for Transferring and Lifting

In preparation for a lift or transfer, you must:

- Assess
- Think
- Communicate
- Plan
- Prepare
- Position
- Protect

#### ASSESS

Assess the situation and determine the most appropriate transfer/lift

#### THINK

Determine if extra help is necessary

#### COMMUNICATE

Inform the client of what you are going to do and what he/she must do to help

#### PLAN

- Prepare the area:
  - Check the area for obstacles
  - Check the equipment for safety
  - Place equipment to be used conveniently

- Prepare the equipment
  - Remove leg/arm rests if possible
  - Lock any wheels on involved equipment
  - Set chair/bed at optimum level and position
- Prepare the client
  - Ensure clothing and footwear are appropriate
  - Apply or remove splints/braces as appropriate

## POSITION

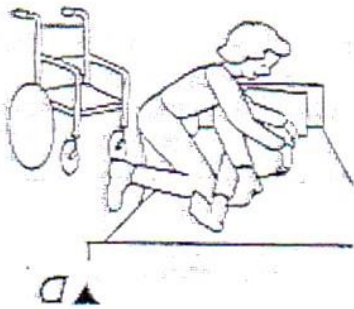
Position yourself close to the client in order to:

- Maintain good control
- Use good body mechanics
- Make the client feel safe
- Decrease the risk of back injury

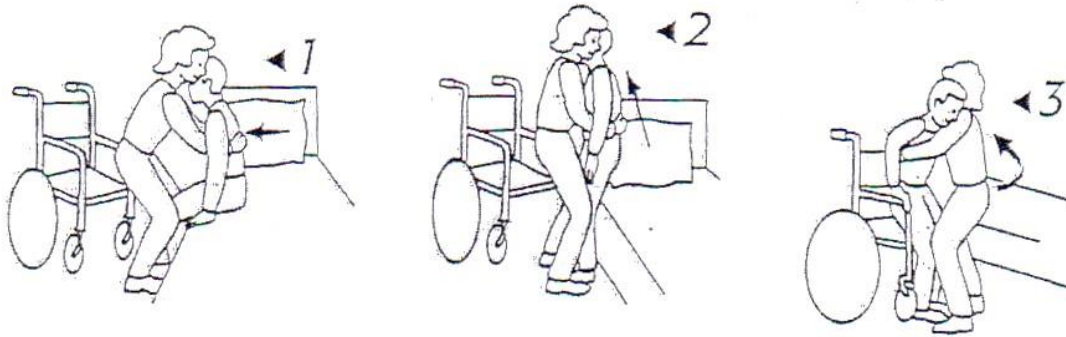
## PROTECT

If you need assistance ASK!

### Moving a Client Safely



## Moving a Client from Bed to Chair:



## **The Walking Client**

You are often expected to assist the client when he/she walks. It may be after a period of bed rest, an injury or stroke.

The client may be requiring a walking aid, such as a cane, crutches, or they may need you to walk beside them for support.

## Walking with a client:

You should stand close to the patient on the weaker side, using the **Palm to Palm Thumb Grip** (shown); on the right side of the client you hold the clients right hand in your right hand on the left, vice-versa. The clients arm should be straight, pressing down with his/her palm onto your palm with thumbs interlocked.



Your other hand can be used to keep the clients elbow straight, but without gripping his arm painfully or putting pressure under his arm pit, or you can hold him/her around the waist. You must stand close to the client to avoid unnecessary strain on your back; but also support the client, and both face in the

direction in which you are walking. Take the clients weight through your hip rather than through your back, should he/she start to sag.

If the client feels **unsteady** you maintain the **Palm to Palm Grip**, hold the client close with the other arm around his and block his knees with your leading leg.

If the client is able to hold a walker but is weak, give the client confidence simply by walking behind pushing a chair. This allows the client to sit down immediately should he/she have to stop.

### **If the Client Falls**

- Do not attempt to catch him/her. Guide him/her to the floor, protecting his/her head.
- Do not attempt to lift him/her back into a chair/bed. Arrange a pillow under his/her head and cover him/her with a blanket.
- Call for assistance to get him/her up.

### **The Aggressive Client**

There exists a potential for further injury to a staff member when dealing with, and giving care to an aggressive client.

Avoid Injury to yourself:

- ✎ Know what to expect from your client
  - Ask questions when receiving your client's assignment, you will then be prepared for your client's responses in different situations
- ✎ Do not respond with anger
  - When a client shouts and becomes verbally abusive remain calm. Do not use a sharp, loud or hurried tone
- ✎ Do not take the behaviour personally
  - It may seem as though the hostility is aimed at you, however actual facts are that this rarely occurs usually controlled

### **Dealing with the Aggressive Client**

- Stay calm
- Stand facing the aggressive person with feet slightly apart. Keep arms at their sides with palms facing up (never clench fists).

- Keep voices down. Do not argue with the aggressor. Speak slowly using simple and precise words. Be polite, calm and positive.
- Identify the issues leading up to the escalating behaviour to reassure the client that the worker is concerned.
- Let the person know that they are being listened to using appropriate communication signals.
- Reassure the client that their concerns will be addressed as soon as it is feasible and safe to do so.
- If possible, move away from the person, maintaining a distance of at least six feet.
- Watch body language.
- If possible, phone the office and alert them of the problem.
- Leave the house if it is suspected that the person is about to lose control.
- Leave immediately if the client brandishes a weapon of any kind.
- In the event of family violence, workers should leave the premises and call the police when they are at a safe distance.
- Report incident to supervisor or designate.

### Environmental Checklist

Before assisting any client you should be familiar with the equipment they are using and its safety issues.

#### Check all equipment daily to ensure it is being used safely:

BED	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wheels are easily moved</li> <li>• Brakes work &amp; are on</li> <li>• Mattress Stable &amp; Centered</li> <li>• Height adjusted to proper height if possible (low if client getting in and out, your waist height when giving care only)</li> <li>• Side rails working and down when client in bed (as needed)</li> </ul>
CHAIRS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allows client to place feet on the floor</li> <li>• Supports back and head if needed</li> <li>• Firm seat and back</li> </ul>
WHEELCHAIRS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Removable armrests and leg rests</li> <li>• Brakes work and are on when client stopped</li> </ul>



WORK SURFACES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work at height of bent elbow</li> <li>• Within arm reach</li> </ul>
STORAGE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Store objects at waist height (most)</li> <li>• Heavy objects – mid-thigh to elbow height</li> </ul>

## Improve the Way You Work

You have learned the importance of good body mechanics throughout this module. Use these principles and techniques while caring for the client, making a meal or cleaning a kitchen. Use these principles in your work and in your personal life. They will make your tasks easier and safer.

Work is more fun if you use the easiest way that gets good results. How well do you use these six working methods?

- Use both hands...
  - Use a dust cloth or mitt in each hand to dust furniture
  - Take dishes from a cabinet with both hands and place on a tray
  - Use both hands when setting a table
- Place your work within easy reach...
  - Take all tools and supplies into the room to be cleaned before cleaning
  - Assemble utensils and supplies needed for prepared food before beginning
- Eliminate things that do not need to be done
  - Air-dry dishes instead of drying them with a cloth
  - Use synthetic detergent in bathtub to prevent bathtub ring
- Combine jobs when possible
  - Use furniture polish that cleans as it polishes
  - Use a cleaner that cleans and disinfects
- Make full use of tools and materials
  - Use vacuum cleaner for dusting
  - Use utility cart or tray for carrying several small items
- Maintain good posture and use muscles properly.
  - Use leg muscles rather than back muscles when lifting
  - Use easy, free rhythmic motions in sweeping, dusting and similar tasks

# CLIENT SAFETY

## Preventing Client Falls in and Around the Home

Anyone can fall, but the risk of falling becomes greater with age. Hip fractures are the most common type of fall injury among seniors. Nearly half of all injuries among seniors happen at home. The bathroom and stairs are particularly dangerous areas.

Factors that increase the risk of falling include the following:

- Poor balance
- Decreased muscle and bone strength
- Reduce vision and hearing
- Unsafe conditions in and around the home

You, as a Home Support Worker, can help prevent falls by ensuring the following safety measures are taken, as well as encouraging your client to eat well, stay fit, and use whatever safety devices they may need to keep them safe!

### In the Bathroom

- Use a rubber mat for the tub & shower. Install the mat when the tub is dry.
- Encourage client to use grab bars by the toilet and bath.
- Use a bath seat and raised toilet seat, if needed.
- Wipe up any moisture or spills right away.

### In the Living Room and Bedroom

- Reduce clutter; remove loose wires, cords and other obstacles.
- Ensure good lighting.
- Make sure path is clear between bedroom and bathroom.
- Scatter mats are a tripping hazard. Make sure they are non-slip or ask clients permission to remove them.
- Encourage client to move slowly out of bed or chair. Getting up suddenly can cause dizziness.

### In the Kitchen

- Store kitchen supplies and pots and pans in easy-reach locations.
- Store heavy items in lower cupboards.
- Use a step stool with a safety rail for reaching high places
- Always wipe up spills immediately to prevent slipping.
- If you use floor wax, use the non-skid kind.
- Encourage client to ask for help with tasks that cannot be done safely alone.

## **Around Stairways**

- Make sure stairs are well lit.
- Ensure client uses handrails on sides of the stairway.
- Client should remove reading glasses when going up or down stairs.
- Client should never rush up or down stairs. Rushing is a major cause of falls.

## **Around the Exterior of the Home**

- Encourage client/family to keep steps and walkways in good repair and free of snow, ice and leaves.
- Front entrance should be well-lit.
- Gardening and other tools should be put away when not in use.