

Chapter 25

USING BODY MECHANICS

What You Will Learn

- The definition of body mechanics
- Reasons why body mechanics are important
- Key points of body mechanics
- Principles of lifting and moving
- How to move a client to head of bed according to proper procedure
- How to turn client to side (3/4 turn) according to proper procedure

Body Mechanics

Body Mechanics means using correct techniques in performing certain functions in a manner that does not add undue strain to the body. As an In-Home Aide, one of your duties is moving clients. You must know how to do this without straining your back and causing injury to yourself or the client.

The Importance of Body Mechanics

Body mechanics protect you from injury by aligning body segments to each other. By standing straight, the main parts of your body (head, chest, and pelvis) are properly aligned one over the other to maintain good balance. Using good body mechanics reduces fatigue to prevent strain on the spine. They make the spine work with you to maximize body strength and make lifting, transferring, and moving objects easier. Body mechanics also provide balance and stability.

Clients often need help when moving in bed. You must observe your client carefully to determine the safest way to move him. Keep in mind the principles of body mechanics any time you are moving the client. Proper positioning of the client in the bed is necessary to maintain normal body function, prevent contractures, ensure comfort, and prevent pressure on one area of the body. Body alignment is the proper relationship of body parts to each other to avoid unnecessary strain/injury. Always look at the client when positioning him to see if his body is straight and looks comfortable. Check to make sure no bony areas are pressing/rubbing on the mattress.

Key Points of Body Mechanics

Remember your feet are your base of support. Your strongest and largest muscles are in the shoulders, upper arms, hips, and thighs. These are the muscles that we use to lift and move heavy objects.

When moving clients, be sure they know when they are going to be moved, how you plan to do it and where you are going to move them. Use verbal cues (see Figure 25.1). Determine what has to be done and how to do it safely (see Figure 25.2).

*Figure 25.1
Informing the Client*



*Figure 25.2
Determine Procedure Needs*

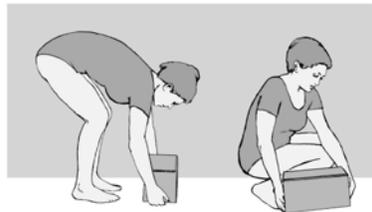


Place your feet apart (about 18 inches) with one foot slightly ahead of the other. Feet should be shoulder-width apart to give you a broad base of support (see Figure 25.3). Get close to whatever is being lifted instead of reaching for it. Move in and hold the object close to your body (see Figure 25.4). Keep your back straight; bend at the hip and knees (see Figure 25.5).

*Figure 25.3
Feet 18" Apart*



*Figure 25.4
Lifting Position*

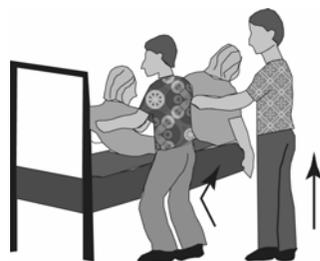


*Figure 25.5
Lifting Posture*



Straighten your legs and use your upper arm and leg muscles to lift (see Figure 25.6). Lift smoothly to avoid strain produced by jerky movements. Use verbal cues to signal when it is time to move (e.g., count one, two, and three, Stand!) (see Figure 25.7).

*Figure 25.6
Proper Lifting*



*Figure 25.7
Lifting as a Team (1-2-3 Lift)*



Push, pull, slide, and roll objects (not people) whenever possible, rather than lift (see Figure 25.8). Remind others to use good body mechanics (see Figure 25.9).

*Figure 25.8
Push Objects when Possible*



*Figure 25.9
Remind Coworkers to Use Good Techniques*



Principles to Remember When Lifting and Moving

When an action requires physical effort, try to use as many muscles as possible. For example, use both hands rather than one hand to pick up a heavy piece of equipment. When you lift an object or pick something up off the floor, squatting down rather than bending over reduces strain on the spine.

Always look for any obstacles or hazards before moving a client. Change of position (lying to sitting, sitting to standing) may cause the client to become dizzy. The In-Home Aide's movements should be slow and steady. Explain to the client what you are going to do so that he will have confidence in you. If the client is able to assist with moving, give the client instructions about what to do and when to do it. For example, an In-Home Aide instructs the client to bend knees and place feet firmly on bed. On the count of three, the client pushes with his feet as the In-Home Aide moves the client up in the bed. Do not allow client to hold you around your neck when moving him.

When possible use a lift sheet to move the client. NEVER slide his skin over the sheets. A lift sheet can be used to help lift the client, which helps prevent friction on the skin. Sliding causes the client's skin to rub against the sheets which can scratch and injure the skin. Handle the client gently. Remember, skin is easily bruised and bones are easily broken. Protect all tubing when moving a client. Roll the client toward you rather than away from you whenever possible.

Chapter 25

USING BODY MECHANICS

PROCEDURE FOR MOVING A CLIENT TO THE HEAD OF THE BED:

1. Wash your hands.
2. Explain what you are going to do.
3. Provide privacy.
4. If the client uses a hospital bed, raise the bed to a comfortable working height; lock the wheels on bed.
5. Lower the head of the bed. If side rails are used; lower the side rail on the side where you are working.
6. If the client has any tubing coming from his body and it is pinned to the bedding, unfasten the tubing so that it will move freely with the client.
7. Move the pillow to headboard so client does not hit his head when moving up.
8. Stand facing the head of the bed with your feet shoulder width (18 inches) apart and your knees slightly bent.
9. Slip one arm under the client's shoulders and the other under his thighs. Instruct the client to bend his knees and place his feet flat against the mattress. The client will push with his feet to assist with moving up in the bed.
10. Point your feet in the direction you are moving the client; bend your knees, keep your back straight.
11. On the count of three, assist the client to move toward the head of the bed while shifting weight from your back foot to your front foot. Several small moves may be made rather than one large move to reach the head of the bed.
12. Replace the pillow.
13. Adjust the backrest for comfort.
14. If necessary, lower the bed to a safe position; raise the side rails as ordered per the service plan.
15. Make the client comfortable. Fasten tubing if unpinned while moving client; adjust bedding.
16. Wash your hands.

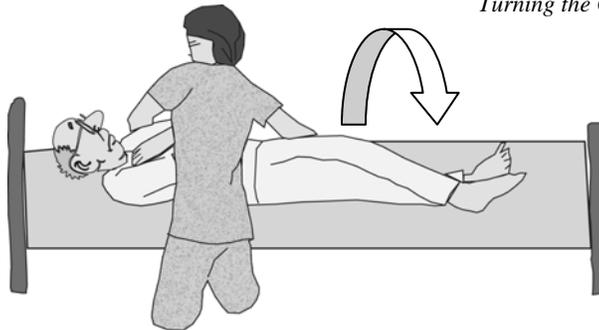
Chapter 25

USING BODY MECHANICS

PROCEDURE FOR TURNING A CLIENT ON TO HIS SIDE (3/4 TURN):

1. Wash your hands.
2. Explain what you are going to do.
3. Provide privacy.
4. If the client uses a hospital bed, raise the bed to a comfortable working height; lock the wheels on the bed.
5. Lower the head of the bed. If side rails are used, lower the rail on the side where you are working.
6. If the client has any tubing coming from his body and it is pinned to the bedding, unfasten the tubing so that it will move freely with the client.
7. Loosen the top sheets without exposing the client. Remove the pillow.
8. Cross the client's arms over his chest.
9. Cross the leg farthest from you over the leg closest to you.
10. Reach across the client and put one hand behind his far shoulder.
11. Place your other hand behind his hip and gently roll him toward you (see Figure 25.10).

Figure 25.10
Turning the Client Toward You

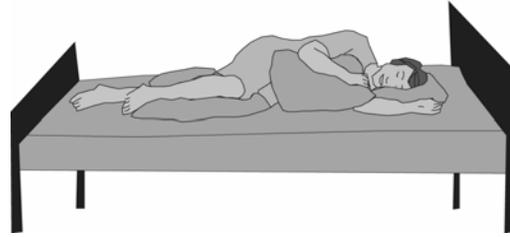


12. Fold a pillow lengthwise and place it against the client's back for support. As you face the client, pull the side of the lift sheet that is closest to you slightly toward you.
13. Support the client's head with the palm of one hand and slide a pillow under his/her head and neck with the other hand.

14. Position client's knees slightly flexed, upper leg more than the lower leg. Support the upper leg on pillow (Figure 25.11).

*Figure 25.11
Lateral Position*

15. Support upper arm on pillow.
16. Rotate lower shoulder slightly toward you so that pressure is not on the bone.



17. Place hand-roll or rolled washcloth in clean, dry hand with thumb in opposition to fingers (per service plan).
18. Make the client comfortable, fasten tubing if unpinned while moving client, and adjust bedding.
19. If necessary, lower the bed to a position of safety; raise side rails per service plan.
20. Wash your hands.

Chapter Review

1. What are body mechanics?
2. Why are body mechanics important?
3. What are the key points of body mechanics?
4. What are the principles of lifting and moving?
5. How do you move a client to head of bed according to proper procedure?
6. How do you turn a client to his side (3/4 turn) according to proper procedure?

