

How to Transfer an Individual Using a Gait Belt



PURPOSE: To provide safety and protection from possible injury during transfer and ambulation.

EQUIPMENT:

- Appropriate footwear
- Gait Belt
- Assistive devices (if needed and appropriate for the individual)

ACTION:

1. Wash Hands
2. Explain to the individual what you are going to do.
3. Apply the belt while the individual is in a comfortable sitting position. If the individual is lying in bed and has poor sitting balance, apply the gait belt while they are lying down.
4. Make sure the belt is applied tightly enough to prevent it from riding up or down on the individual's body, but loosely enough so you can grasp it firmly and comfortably.
5. If the individual complains of dizziness or symptoms when in an upright position, do not leave them for any reason. Call for assistance if needed.
6. If the individual has a weak side, make sure his or her stronger side is facing the destination (for example, toward the wheelchair or toilet)
7. Lock brakes on equipment that the individual is transferred from and will be transferred to.
8. Stand as close to the individual as possible. Stand in front keeping your back straight, your knees slightly bent, and your feet with a wide stance.
9. Hold the individual at the waist rather than arms or shoulders. Lean forward and grasp the gait belt on both sides.
10. Encourage the individual to participate by pushing up on the mattress, bearing some weight (if allowed), and turn toward the destination.

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How to Transfer an Individual Using a Gait Belt *continued*



ACTION:

11. Make sure the individual can see the surface to which he is transferring.
12. Always move your body in the direction in which the transfer is taking place.
13. Make sure the individual is wearing shoes.
14. When the destination has been reached, gently lower and encourage the individual to use his or her arms to reach toward the destination and bear some of the weight.
15. Remove the belt once the individual is comfortably and safely seated.

Notes:

- If the individual is particularly heavy or has difficulty supporting their own weight, consider using a lift transfer device.
- The gait belt may also be used to aide walking by positioning yourself slightly to the rear of the individual and holding the belt at the small of the back of the individual as he/she walks.

REFERENCE:

Excerpted and adapted from Perry AG, Potter PA: Clinical nursing skills & techniques, ed 7, St. Louis, 2010, Mosby.