

When you transfer, make it a goal to **minimize injury to your wrists, arms, and shoulders**.

Transferring in and out of your wheelchair puts higher stress on your arms and shoulders than anything else you do on a regular basis. Learning the correct way to transfer is extremely important in order to keep your arms functioning and pain-free.

1

OPTIMIZE YOUR POSITION

Wheelchair Position



Move wheelchair within 3 inches of target surface.

Angle your wheelchair 0-19 degrees with the target surface

Turn power off.

Body Position



Remove armrest and clothing guard.

Scoot buttocks forward to transfer in front of rear wheel.

Place both feet in a stable position on the floor or foot plates.

2

PROTECT WRISTS, ARMS, AND SHOULDERS

Grips



Grip hand on edge of bed, armrest, wheel, seat, or frame. If unable to grip, use curled fingers to reduce strain.

Avoid fist or flat hand.

Hand Placement



Your leading shoulder should be at a 30-45 degree angle.

Keep your trailing hand (*hand behind you*) close to your body and your leading hand (*hand in front of you*) close to the landing site.

Avoid twisting your leading arm.

3

CONTROL YOUR MOVEMENT

Head-Hips Relationship



Bend forward so your chest is nearly parallel to the floor.

Attempt to pivot so the head and hips move in opposite directions.

Smooth Landing



No Explosive Movements!

Keep movements for both transfer and landing smooth and safe.

Avoid landing or resting on the tire.

Visit [MSKTC.org](https://msktc.org) for more resources about safe transfer techniques and other types of transfers, including using sliding boards: <https://msktc.org/sci-topics/safe-transfer-techniques>

Safe Independent Power Wheelchair Transfers was developed by researchers at the University of Pittsburgh Spinal Cord Injury Model System and the American Institutes for Research in collaboration with the Model Systems Knowledge Translation Center.

Source: The content in this infographic is based on research evidence and/or professional consensus and has been reviewed and approved by experts from the Spinal Cord Injury Model Systems, funded by the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research (NIDILRR).

Disclaimer: This information is not meant to replace the advice of a medical professional. You should consult your health care provider regarding specific medical concerns or treatment. The contents of this infographic were developed under grants from NIDILRR (grant numbers: 90DP0082, 90DP0078 and 90SI5014). NIDILRR is a Center within the Administration for Community Living (ACL), Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). The contents of this infographic do not necessarily represent the policy of NIDILRR, ACL, or HHS, and you should not assume endorsement by the federal government.

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