Safe Independent Manual Wheelchair Transfers

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SCIMS Spinal Cord Injury Model System Since 1970

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 20-45 degrees with the target surface.

Lock the brakes.

Body Position

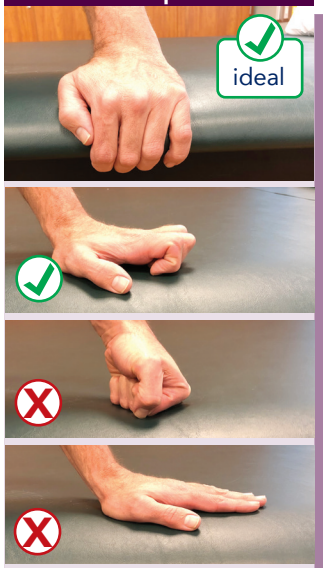
Remove armrest and clothing guard.

Scoot buttocks forward to transfer in front of rear wheel.

Place both feet in a stable position on the floor.

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 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 Manual 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.

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