Safe Independent Manual Wheelchair Transfers

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**

- **Ideal grip** on edge of bed, armrest, wheel, seat, or frame.
- **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.
- **Avoid** landing or resting on the tire.

**Smooth Landing**

- **Grip** hand on edge of bed, armrest, wheel, seat, or frame.
- **If unable to grip,** use curled fingers to reduce strain.
- **Avoid** twisting your leading arm.

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