

Guideline D4: Assisting a person in/out of bed or on/off a trolley or table

Remember - carers are twice as likely as people in most other professions to injure their backs through moving and handling activities. To help minimise these risks always consider the guidance below before assisting a person to get in/out of bed:

Self help	Can the activity be avoided altogether i.e. can the person get into bed independently perhaps by crawling on the bed and then turning over; sit on the edge then lay on their side and draw their legs up; or sit on the edge of the bed, then shuffle into the centre, turn and draw their legs up.
Ergonomics	The bed should be of appropriate height with a firm mattress. Low friction rollers, sliding sheets, a fabric turntable, hand blocks and bed levers may assist movement on the bed. Leg raisers can enable those with arm strength to lift their own legs. Powered leg raisers exist for those who cannot do this. A handling sling or single layer slide sheet under the legs reduces the distance carers have to reach down to lift legs. A hoist should be used for non weight bearing people.
Communication	Check how the person prefers to get into bed e.g. by lying on their side or swivelling into bed. Ensure that the person can cooperate. Give clear prompts e.g. "reach across the bed and look at your hand" to encourage trunk rotation.
Safety	Check that the bed/table will not move. Ensure the person has sufficient trunk control to prevent them tipping backwards when their legs are lifted or that a backrest or second carer can provide support. Use low friction equipment if there is risk of skin damage. Check the person is sitting far enough up the bed to avoid having to assist them to move up the bed again later.

Method 1: Assisting a person to swivel into bed

Preparation (2 carers may be needed)

1. Assess the number of carers needed (1 will be required if the person can reliably support themselves with their legs raised otherwise 2 will be required).
2. Adjust the bed to a suitable height if possible and position a sliding sheet or low friction roller if required where the person's buttocks and their legs will be placed on the bed. Ensure there is gap between the low friction aid and edge of the bed to prevent the person slipping off.
3. Encourage the person to sit on the sheet/roller and shuffle/slide to the centre of the bed. Hand blocks may be used to assist this.
4. Stand close to the person at an oblique angle facing the foot of the bed and adjust the bed height again if required.
5. If a second carer is required they position themselves ready to provide support for the person's trunk.
6. Encourage the person to rotate their body as much as possible.

Providing assistance

1. Support the person's ankles. A handling sling placed behind the person's ankles may be used to prevent stooping
2. Ask the person to look over their far shoulder and reach across the bed and as they do so assist them to raise their legs to the edge of the bed with the handling sling (Fig: 1).



Fig: 1

3. Ask the person to move their legs to the centre of the bed or use low friction equipment to assist this.
4. Remove any low friction equipment that has been used.

Method 2: Assisting a person into bed - side lying

Preparation (1 carer is usually needed)

1. Ensure that the person can reliably lower onto their side as their legs are raised and that they are in the correct position for their head to rest on the pillow as they lower
2. Adjust the bed to a suitable height if possible
3. Stand close to the person at an oblique angle facing the foot of the bed
4. Explain to the person that they will need to lower onto their elbow then shoulder and that as they do so you will assist them to lift their legs

Providing assistance

1. Encourage the person to lower onto the pillow
2. As they do so assist them to raise their legs onto the edge of the bed, a handling sling may be used to prevent stooping (Fig: 2)
3. Ask the person roll onto their back to enable them to move to the centre of the bed



Fig: 2

Method 3: Assisting a person to swivel out of bed

Preparation (2 carers may be needed)

1. If possible adjust the bed/table to a suitable height and position low friction equipment under the person's buttocks. This needs to be positioned carefully so it will assist the person to turn when sitting but not allow them to slide down the bed. Place another sliding sheet or low friction roller under the person's legs.
2. If a second carer is required they position themselves ready to provide support for the person's trunk.

Providing assistance

1. Encourage or assist the person to sit up (refer to guideline D5: Assisting a person to sit up from lying).
2. The second carer gives support to the person's trunk where appropriate.
3. Use a slide sheet or low friction roller to gently move the person's legs to the edge of the bed.
4. Encourage the person to shuffle to the edge of the bed.
5. Remove any low friction equipment that has been used.

Method 4: Assisting a person out of bed - side lying

This method is only suitable for people who can give a good level of assistance and have good trunk and upper limb control.

Preparation (1 carer is usually needed)

1. If possible adjust the bed to a suitable height.
2. Explain to the person that they will roll onto their side and then move their legs over the edge of the bed then sit up.

Providing assistance

1. Ask or assist the person to bend their knees.
2. Encourage or assist the person to roll onto their side (refer to guideline D3: Assisting a person to roll).
3. Position and guide their feet over the edge of the bed (a low friction aid may be used under the legs to assist this).
4. Take a hold under the lower shoulder and an open palm hold on the opposite hip.
5. Ask the person to push with their elbow and hand on the bed.
6. Guide the hip down as the person pushes on their hand.

Warning

- These methods are only suitable for those who can give a high level of cooperation.
- Ensure that the person can reliably move and maintain their balance before giving assistance with this task. Mechanical equipment should be used to assist those who cannot do this.
- Do not leave a person unattended on a low friction roller.
- Do not leave low friction rollers on the floor – they may cause slipping.
- Do not position low friction rollers directly on the edge of a bed.
- Do not tug at the roller. If it does not come out easily keep changing the angle of pull.