

Guideline F3: Using hoists

Remember – carers are twice as likely as people in most other professions to injure their backs through handling and moving activities. To help minimise these risks always consider the following guidance before using hoists

Self help	Can the activity be avoided i.e. can the person assist with some of the activities? People may not be able to stand but may be able to roll, position legs etc. Do not hoist someone unnecessarily, some people may require it some days and not others.
Ergonomics	Hoists and slings should be suitable for the person's needs, the environment in which they will be used and the carer using them. Slings can be tailor made for people with particular needs.
Communication	Check how the person wishes to be assisted and consult their handling plan. Hoisting can be frightening for those not used to it. Some people may find it reassuring if some hand contact is maintained during hoisting. Where possible try to find a position where you can maintain good eye contact with the person.
Safety	Follow manufacturer's instructions on care and maintenance of hoists and slings. Systems should be set up and records kept to ensure that this happens. Do not use a hoist if you notice any faults and report them to your manager/supervisor. Follow manufacturer's instructions for operating the hoist e.g. the application of brakes (brakes often do not need to be applied but there are exceptions). Do not mix hoists and slings from different manufacturers without authorisation. Do not exceed the safe working load of the hoist or sling. Take care when applying or removing the sling to protect the person's skin from friction. Remember that a hoist is for transferring not transporting a person. If they need to travel any distance it is safer and more dignified to use a wheelchair. Be aware of your postures, it is easy to stoop and twist when using a hoist.

Preparation (usually 2 carers needed)

1. Check the person's care plan for specific instructions. This should include:
 - size and style of sling to use
 - type of hoist to use
 - method of applying and removing the sling
 - number of carers required to carry out the activity
 - how to attach the sling to the spreader bar i.e. appropriate loop length
2. Check that the hoist has been inspected within the last 6 months (or period specified by competent person) and is safe to use. **Do not use** if the battery needs charging or there are any other defects.
3. Identify the carers needed and plan the manoeuvre with them and the person.
4. Decide who will give instructions and delegate responsibilities as appropriate.
5. If a mobile hoist is to be used ensure that there is adequate space to manoeuvre and operate it, if necessary move furniture, obstacles etc.
6. Ensure that any equipment to be used in conjunction with the hoist is positioned and prepared as appropriate.
7. Select the appropriate style and size of sling for the person.
8. Position the hoist within easy reach away from the person's line of vision if possible.

Fitting a sling with a person lying in bed or on the floor

There are 2 main methods for fitting a sling when a person is lying in bed or on the floor

- **Method 1 - Fitting a sling by rolling a person**
- **Method 2 - Fitting a sling using slide sheets**

Method 1 - Fitting a sling by rolling a person

1. If possible adjust the bed to a comfortable working height and invite or assist the person to roll onto one side (see guideline C3. Assisting a person to roll or turn).
2. Concertina half the sling lengthways and place it in the appropriate position close to the person. Tuck the folded section underneath them and lay the other half flat on the bed. Alternatively place the sling over the person and tuck as much as possible under the shoulder and hip the person is lying on. Ease out creases.
3. Ask or assist the person to roll onto their back and unfold the remainder of the sling. Provided that care has been taken to position the sling correctly the remainder should be easy to unfold without rolling the person onto their other side and they should be in the centre of the sling. If this is not the case ask or assist them to roll again and position the sling correctly. (Fig: 1)



Fig: 1

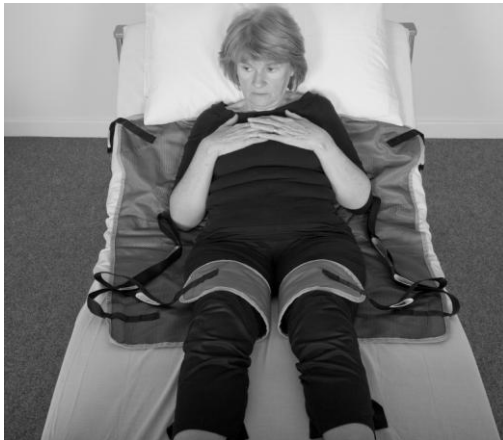


Fig: 2

4. Position the sling under the person's thigh according to manufacturer's instructions and handling plan. Ease out creases as you do this.

Warning

- It is important to follow the instructions specifying the type, style and size of sling to be used in the person's handling plan and, where there is a choice the method of fitting. (Figs: 2, 3, 4)



Fig: 3

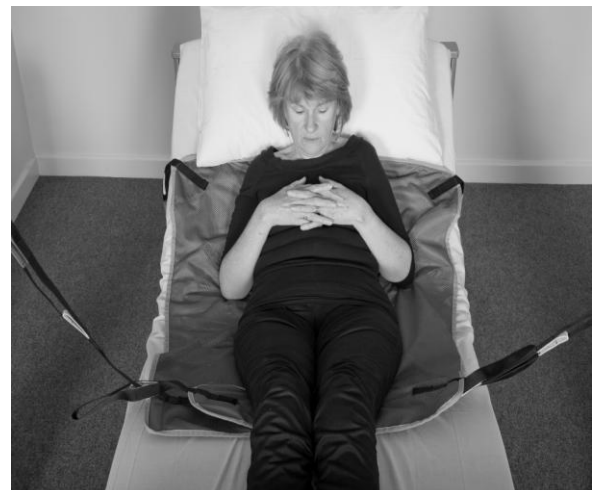


Fig: 4

Method 2 - Fitting a sling using slide sheets

1. Select a pair of slide sheets that are large enough to allow the sling to be fed between them under the person.
2. Fold the sheets together. (The folds should be approximately 15 cm (6 inches) wide, do not concertina the sheets since this makes them difficult to unroll).
3. If possible adjust the bed to a comfortable working height.
4. Decide whether the sheets will be unrolled from the person's head or feet. (Unrolling from the head is usually easier but some may prefer them introduced from their feet).
5. The carers stand on opposite sides of the bed and one slides the folded sheets under the pillow or person's feet to the other. The sheets should lie across the bed with the roll in contact with the bed and positioned so it will unroll under the person (Fig: 5).



Fig: 5

6. Both carers then adopt an oblique position and hold the top of the sheets firmly with one hand and use the other to unroll the folded section. One carer needs to give clear instructions so that they undo each fold together. If the roll gets stuck one carer may gently ease the person a little towards them whilst the other frees it.
7. When the sheets are unrolled and flat under the person position the sling between the layers of the sheet and gently slide it down to an appropriate position. (Fig: 6)



Fig: 6

8. Remove the top sliding sheet by tucking a corner underneath and gently pulling it through so that the fabric is sliding against itself and not the person (Fig: 7).



Fig: 7

Fitting a sling when a person is sitting

There are two main methods for fitting a sling when a person is sitting in a chair or in bed

- Method 1 - Fitting a sling without using slide sheets
- Method 2 - Fitting a sling using slide sheets

Method 1 - Fitting a sling without using slide sheets

1. Ask or assist the person to lean forwards slightly and place the sling behind their back. Ensure that it reaches down enough to be in the appropriate position and that it is central with the shoulder loops in the correct position.
2. Move to the front of the person and kneel on the floor to position the sling under the person's thigh according to manufacturer's instructions. Ask or assist the person to ease their weight from side to side to assist with positioning the leg pieces. If necessary a footrest may be used to support the legs. Ease out creases during positioning.



Fig: 8



Fig: 9

Method 2 - Fitting a sling using slide sheets

1. Place two slide sheets together and position them around the person rather like a cape. Ensure that they reach down to the seat and wrap round the person's sides.
2. Gently ease the sling between the slide sheets ensuring that it is manoeuvred into the correct position.
3. Move to the front of the person and kneel on the floor to position the sling under the person's thigh according to manufacturer's instructions. Ask or assist the person to ease their weight from side to side to assist with positioning the leg pieces. If necessary the slide sheet can be used to assist with positioning and a footrest used to support the legs. Ease out creases during positioning.

Hoisting from bed to chair

1. Ensure that the sling is in the correct position.
2. Position any other equipment required as appropriate e.g. slide sheet to reduce friction under the person's heels, chair/commode.
3. If necessary adjust the base of the hoist to fit around the mechanism of the bed.
4. Guide the hoist slowly and carefully close to the person with the sling attachment (spreader bar) located over their centre of gravity. A mobile hoist may be positioned square to the person or at an oblique angle according to the space available.
5. Attach the sling to the sling attachment (spreader bar) according to manufacturer's instructions and check that it is secure.
6. Raise the hoist. If the sling does not have head support it will be necessary to provide support for the person's head during the initial part of the lift.
7. Guide the sling and steady the person, assist their legs off the bed and ensure that their legs, feet and head do not come into contact with the hoist or other furniture. Check the person has been raised clear of the equipment they will be transferred to.
8. Manoeuvre the hoist slowly and smoothly so that the person does not swing unduly. Take care to apply the principles taught during training for pushing/pulling/turning.
9. Constantly observe the person and keep transportation in the hoist to a minimum.
10. Lower the person over the chair, control the descent and gently guide the sling to avoid any part of the person's body coming into contact with the hoist. Gentle pressure on the knees or using the handles on the sling may help with positioning. If the person is being lowered into a wheelchair that has a tipper bar it may be easier to tip the wheelchair slightly backwards to achieve a good sitting position. This can only be done with this type of wheelchair, commodes, chairs and other types of wheelchair are not safe to be tilted in this way.
11. Check that the person is in the correct position. **If not re-hoist.** When in a suitable position take the tension off the sling, unhook it and move the hoist out of the way.
12. Remove the sling.
13. Store the hoist safely according to manufacturer's instructions.

Hoisting from chair to bed

1. Ensure that the sling is in the correct position
2. Position any other equipment required as appropriate e.g. slide sheet to reduce friction under the person's heels, height and profile of bed
3. If necessary adjust the base of the hoist to fit around the seat the person is on
4. Guide the hoist slowly and carefully close to the person with the sling attachment (spreader bar) positioned at chest level so that it cannot catch the person's head. A mobile hoist may be positioned square to the person or at an oblique angle according to the space available.
5. Attach the sling to the sling attachment (spreader bar) according to manufacturer's instructions and check that it is secure

6. Raise the hoist (Fig: 10).
7. Guide the sling and steady the person, assist their legs off the bed and ensure that their legs, feet and head do not come into contact with the hoist or other furniture (Fig: 11)

**Fig: 10****Fig: 11**

8. Manoeuvre the hoist slowly and smoothly so that the person does not swing unduly. Take care to apply the principles taught during training for pushing/pulling/turning. Constantly observe the person and ensure transportation in the hoist is kept to the minimum.
9. Check the person has been raised clear of the bed that they will be transferred to.
10. Position the person's legs on the bed, control the descent and gently guide the sling to ensure the person is in an appropriate position on the bed. Gentle pressure on the knees or using the handles on the sling may help with positioning (Fig: 12).

**Fig: 12**

11. Check that the person is in the correct position. **If not re-hoist.**
12. When the person is in a suitable position take the tension off the sling, unhook it and move the hoist out of the way.
13. Remove the sling.
14. Store the hoist and sling safely according to manufacturer's instructions.

Hoisting from chair to chair

1. Ensure that the sling in the correct position.
2. Position the other chair in an appropriate position to ensure safety and minimise transportation in the hoist.
3. If necessary adjust the base of the hoist to fit around the seat the person is on.
4. Guide the hoist slowly and carefully close to the person with the sling attachment (spreader bar) positioned at chest level so that it cannot catch the person's head. A mobile hoist may be positioned square to the person or at an oblique angle according to the space available.
5. Attach the sling to the sling attachment (spreader bar) according to manufacturer's instructions and check that it is secure.
6. Raise the hoist. Constantly observe the person, guide the sling and steady the person to ensure that their legs, feet and head do not come into contact with the hoist or other furniture. Manoeuvre the hoist slowly and smoothly so that the person does not swing unduly. Take care to apply the principles taught during training for pushing/pulling/turning.
7. Check the person has been raised clear of the chair they will be transferred to.
8. Lower the person over the chair, control the descent and gently guide the sling to avoid any part of the person's body coming into contact with the hoist. Gentle pressure on the knees or using the handles on the sling may help with positioning. If the person is being lowered into a wheelchair that has a tipper bar it may be easier to tip the wheelchair slightly backwards to achieve a good sitting position. This can only be done with this type of wheelchair; commodes, chairs and other types of wheelchair are not safe to be tilted in this way (Fig: 13).



Fig: 13

9. Check that the person is in the correct position. **If not re-hoist.**
10. When the person is in a suitable position take the tension off the sling, unhook it and move the hoist out of the way.
11. Remove the sling.
12. Store the hoist and sling safely according to manufacturer's instructions.

Hoisting from the floor

Several carers may be needed

1. Ensure that the sling is in the correct position and that the person is comfortable e.g. supported with pillows.
2. Position any other equipment required as appropriate e.g. slide sheet to reduce friction under the person's heels, wheelchair, bed.
3. If necessary adjust the base of the hoist to a suitable position.
4. Guide the hoist slowly and carefully until the sling attachment (spreader bar) is located over the person's centre. If necessary pad metal parts with pillows/towels. According to the space available and type of hoist being used a mobile hoist may be positioned to the back, side or front of the person (Figs: 14, 15, and 16).



Fig: 14



Fig: 15



Fig: 16

5. Attach the sling to spreader bar and check that it is secure
6. Raise the hoist. If the sling does not have head support it will be necessary to support the person's head during the initial part of the lift. Keep checking for any discomfort.
7. When sufficient height is achieved bring in a wheelchair or move the hoist to a bed or chair remembering to apply the principles taught during training for pushing/pulling/turning.
8. Guide the person ensuring that their legs, feet and head do not come into contact with the hoist or furniture. Ensure transportation in the hoist is kept to the minimum.
9. Lower the person gently avoiding any of their body coming into contact with the hoist. Apply gentle pressure to their knees or the sling to assist with positioning.
10. If the person is being lowered into a wheelchair with a tipper bar it may be easier to tip the wheelchair backwards to achieve a good sitting position. This can only be done with appropriate wheelchairs, commodes, chairs and other types of wheelchair are not safe to be tilted in this way.
11. Check the person is in the correct position. **If not re-hoist.** When the suitable position is achieved take the tension off the sling, unhook it and move the hoist away.
12. Remove the sling.
13. Store the hoist and sling safely.

Warning

- Not all mobile hoists will pick up from the floor

Turning using a hoist

If a hoist is used to transfer a person into bed it can also be used to turn them onto their side:

1. Transfer the person in the usual way so that they are lying on their back but only unhook the side of the sling furthest from the hoist and tuck it well under the person.
2. Unhook the part of the sling still connected to turn the spreader bar parallel to the person.
3. Reconnect the sling to the spreader bar and raise the hoist slightly to roll the person.

Warning

- Protect the far side of the bed to prevent the person accidentally rolling out.
- This method will not work with certain slings e.g. toilet/access slings, padded slings.

Using a standing hoist

1. Ensure that the sling is in the correct position.
2. If necessary adjust the base of the hoist to fit around the seat the person is on and guide the hoist slowly and carefully close to the person.
3. Ask or assist the person to raise their feet onto the platform.
4. Manoeuvre the hoist forward so that the person's knees are comfortably positioned against the knee support.
5. Engage the brakes.
6. Fasten legs straps if used.
7. Attach the sling to the sling attachment according to manufacturer's instructions and check that it is secure.
8. Ask the person to hold onto the padded lifting arms of the hoist and lean back into the sling or belt. (Fig: 17).
9. Some manufacturers recommend releasing brakes at this point to allow the hoist to move as the person is raised.
10. Raise the hoist and carry out procedures as appropriate e.g. lower to another seat, remove clothing for toileting, carry out personal hygiene.
11. Constantly observe the person to ensure their comfort and dignity. If the hoist needs to be manoeuvred do not transport the person long distances.



Fig: 17

12. Lower the person and check that they are in the correct position. **If not re-hoist.** When the person is in a suitable position take the tension off the sling, unhook it and move the hoist out of the way.
13. Remove the sling.
14. Store the hoist safely according to manufacturer's instructions.