

Pivot Transfer

How do I go from the bed to the wheelchair, toilet, tub or car using a pivot transfer?

Pivot transfers are useful for a person who is not able to walk safely between surfaces. “Pivot” indicates that the person bears at least some weight on one or both legs and spins to move their bottom from one surface to another. A pivot transfer can be performed in both squatted and full standing positions and can be completed with anywhere from minimal assistance to total assistance from a caregiver or helper.

Setup

As with any transfer, the environment must be set up appropriately beforehand for success and safety with the transfer. Transfers between level surfaces tend to be easier to perform. To perform a true pivot transfer, the two surfaces should be adjacent to each other so that no steps need to be taken. The floor should be dry and clear of obstacles to prevent slips and trips.

- Position the wheelchair directly next to the surface (bed, toilet, tub bench, car, sofa, etc.). A slight angle of 30-45 degrees is helpful but not absolutely necessary.
- Lock the wheelchair brakes and move the footrests out of the way of the feet. The armrest on the side you will be transferring to can also be moved out of the way if desired.
- Always talk to the person being transferred so that assistance is being given at the appropriate time, allowing for coordination of efforts.
- Gait/transfer belt should be placed securely.
- Move person's bottom to the front of the surface they are sitting on so that the feet are in firm contact with the floor.
- If needed, assistance can be given to block the person's knees to provide additional support for weight bearing.
- To complete the transfer, the person should lean forward over their feet, use their hands to push from the surface they are sitting on, swing their bottom around to the adjacent surface and slowly sit back down.

Examples of transfer surfaces:

- Wheelchair to and from bed
- Wheelchair to and from toilet
- Wheelchair to and from bathtub
- Wheelchair to and from car