



# Bed Mobility, Transfers and Ambulation After Stroke

A stroke can cause weakness, altered muscle tone, loss of coordination, changes in sensation and decreased body awareness. These can impact a person's ability to move. Careful handling of the person during movement can improve safety and comfort.

## What you should know

The safety and success of any mobility activity depends on a number of factors (See Smart Tips for Stroke Care – Mobility After Stroke).

There are four main types of movement which include **bed mobility** (e.g. rolling), **transitional movements** (e.g. lie to sit, sit to stand), **transfers** (e.g. pivot or stepping to move between surfaces such as bed and chair), and **ambulation** (e.g. walking).

Always protect and never pull on the affected arm when moving (See Smart Tips for Stroke Care - The Hemiplegic Arm and Hand)

## Smart Tips

Always follow the care plan and lift policies at your organization!

### Rolling in bed



Before rolling, ask the person (or help them) to:

1. bend their knees and place feet flat on the bed
2. initiate the roll by allowing the knees to fall, turning the head, and reaching with the arm towards the direction of the roll

Assist the person by helping at the back of the shoulder blade and hip as needed

### Moving from Lying to Sitting



Once the person is on their side, ask the person (or help them) to:

1. Bring their feet over the edge of the bed by moving their knees up towards their chest
2. Push up with the bottom arm to sit up. If assistance is needed, place one hand underneath the bottom ribs near the shoulder blade, and one hand on the upper hip.

Once the person is sitting safely, lower the height of bed if possible, to allow feet to be in contact with the floor

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## Moving between sitting and standing



### Moving from Sitting to Standing

- Stand on the person's affected side

#### Ask the person (or help them) to:

1. Shift their hips forward towards the edge of the sitting surface
2. Position the feet shoulder width apart, with the heels on the floor under the knees
3. Sit up tall, then bend forward at the hips while looking forward (not at the floor) with back straight
4. Push up from the bed with both hands, if able. DO NOT allow the person to pull on the walker to stand
5. Push through their legs with their weight equally distributed on both legs. If assistance is needed, assist under the buttocks.

### Moving from Standing to Sitting

- Before sitting, the person should feel the back of their legs touching the edge of the sitting surface (e.g. chair, bed, etc.)

#### Ask the person (or help them) to:

1. Reach back to place their hand(s) on armrests or the sitting surface
2. Bend forward slightly, then bend their knees to lower themselves slowly to sitting
3. Shift their hips back on the sitting surface

## Transferring between surfaces



- It may be easier for the person to move towards their stronger side, if possible
- Position the chair/commode as close to the bed as possible. Ensure brakes are applied and arm/foot rests are out of the way
- Ask the person (or help them) shift their hips forward to the edge of the sitting surface
- Position yourself as close to the person as possible on their weaker/affected side without blocking their movement
- Following the care plan for the individual, guide the person onto their feet and help them shift their hips from one surface to the other. Cue the person to reach towards the surface they are transferring to. If a second helper is needed, they can help guide the hips from behind

## Walking

- Once standing, pause to ensure balance before walking. If a gait aid is used, have it nearby
- While walking, stand on the affected side, maintaining a close distance to steady the person as needed
- Encourage the person to look up/forward to where they are going rather than at the floor
- Assist the person to avoid obstacles in their path if vision or spatial awareness is affected

## Seek extra support

- ✓ Physiotherapists and Occupational Therapists are experts in mobility and transfers. It may be helpful to involve them if there are questions or concerns.
- ✓ Notify the team if you notice a change in the person's ability to transfer or ambulate.

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