

Lifting to Prevent Back Injuries

It is important to learn how to lift correctly, so that you place the least amount of strain on your body, particularly your back. It is a good idea to attend one of your daughter's PT sessions to get suggestions for the best ways to care for her with the least lifting possible. The school district may even allow you to have special PT sessions for training purposes. Ask your school administrator or request it in her IEP. While good lifting techniques can prevent injuries, they will also make transfers safer and easier. A training session should include: transferring in and out of your car, in and out of the tub, in and out of sitting to stand position, placing the wheelchair in and out of the car, and any other situations which pull on your back. When lifting, widen the base of your stance and bend your legs while keeping your back straight. When transferring from bed to chair, lean your daughter forward into your shoulder. A sliding board is an inexpensive piece of equipment which can be used for safe transfers. If your daughter is able to learn to assist you, practice often so she can gain strength to help. There are a number of mechanical devices when lifting becomes too difficult. Ramps, platform lifts, stairway lifts, and elevators increase accessibility and decrease back strain. Bathtub and bedside lifts can be invaluable. When changing diapers, it is better to roll the girl on her side to place the diaper under her rather than to lift her hips. It may not seem like a lot of strain, but over time, lifting the wrong way can be harmful.

The general principles of lifting are:

- the force is against you
- lift from the waist
- add upper body weight
- watch your weight
- warm up before lifting

The causes of back injuries include:

- lifting from the waist, and twisting
- lifting overhead or away from you
- heavy, repetitive lifting
- awkward position
- unbalanced load

- sitting/standing in one position too long

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