

## Body Mechanics

The proper use of our bodies is called *body mechanics*. It involves standing and moving in ways that prevent injury, avoid fatigue, and make the best use of strength. When you learn how to move, control and balance your own body, it's easier to control and help or move another person.

## Preventing Back and Neck Pain

To prevent injuries to yourself, get plenty of rest and maintain:

- Good nutrition.
- Physical fitness.
- Good body mechanics.
- A stress management program such as daily meditation.
- A stretching routine before you lift.
- A back strengthening exercise program.

## General Rules

The following hints will help you use proper body mechanics and be safe.

- Only lift as much as you can comfortably handle.
- Always let the person you are helping know what you are going to do.
- To create a base of support, stand with your feet 8"–12" apart with one foot a half step ahead of the other.
- Bend your knees slightly.
- Keep your spine in a neutral (normal arched, not stiff) position while lifting.
- USE YOUR LEGS instead of our back to do most of the work—leg muscles are stronger than back muscles.
- If you can adjust the bed, keep the top at about waist level. If it is low or you are tall, put one foot on a footstool to relieve pressure on your lower back.

### Remember these tips:

1. Let the person you are helping do as much as he can do safely.
2. Never allow the person you are helping to put his arms around your neck.
3. Have the person PUSH off rails, chair arms, etc. (No pulling)
4. Avoid sudden jerking movements; move slowly and communicate what you are doing and need the person to do. Remember, if the person does not move often, he may become lightheaded with a change in position—**move slowly!**
5. If, during a transfer, you start to "lose" the person, do not try to hold him up. Doing so will probably result in injury. Instead, lower him slowly to the floor and call for assistance.

*Homecare currently provides support to 13 families and employs 12 caregivers.*

*During our annual spring meeting/class, employees of CCH renewed CPR certification for the next two years. It's always helpful to refresh our CPR skills especially since the procedure is updated periodically. The idea is to make CPR simpler so that people can remember steps to follow in an emergency. Part of CPR training also covers what actions to take if someone is choking. I actually had to perform this maneuver on my husband Gary recently while he was choking on food. I only had to use a couple thrusts and he was saved!*

*I hope you are finally able to enjoy some beautiful spring weather and stop to smell those roses~ Happy Mother's Day!*