

12 Rules of Body Mechanics for Homecare Nurses

Golden Rule: Treat your patients how you would want to be treated!

Before repositioning a patient, imagine being in the position yourself. If you think through the comfort level of your patients, you will ensure proper body alignment (and your patients will be more comfortable).

1. Warm Up.

Perform stretches to warm up your body prior to working with your patients.

- > lateral stretches
- > arm circles
- > squats
- > neck stretches
- > back stretches (see right)



2. Assess the Load.

Before you lift anything—your patient, supplies, or a piece of equipment—be sure to assess the size, shape, weight, and angle of the person or object.



3. Utilize Materials.

To help reduce possible injury to yourself and your patients, utilize the materials around you, including the draw sheet, cloth chux pad, and sling.

4. Check Your Feet.



Your feet are your foundation and base of support. Make sure they are planted firmly on the floor and shoulder-width apart.

Don't forget to wear slip-resistant, closed-toe shoes!

8. Use Your Legs!

Use your legs to bend at the knees and hips. This will reduce pressure and strain on your back.

Begin in a squatting position and use your leg muscles to lift!

Keep your core tight! It enhances balance and stability!

5. Check Your Alignment.

Keep your back straight and face your feet and body towards your patient or the object you are moving.

When sitting, sit erect with good posture!

6. Do Not Twist!

Twisting at the waist puts unnecessary strain on your back and neck muscles.

Pivot with your feet to maintain proper body alignment and base of support.

7. Maintain Center of Gravity.

If standing, your center of gravity is in your core. A lower center of gravity provides increased stability.

You can achieve this by bending your knees and squatting when moving patients or objects.

10. Push, Pull, Lift.

And in that order! Lifting increases risk for injury because you must maintain your center of gravity and balance.

When appropriate, it is always better to push objects because you can utilize your body weight.

9. Get Up Close and Personal.

Do not be afraid to keep your patient close to your body. The closer the better!

11. No Reaching!

Never reach to lift an object!

12. Clear Your Path.

Always clear your path and pick up items that may cause interference with your movement.



This list of body mechanics can be utilized at any time and in any setting. In situations where you cannot prevent bending your back, it is important to maintain a stretch and muscle building regimen before and after your shift to reduce potential injury in the future.

Form good habits now, and keep your core tight!

Still having issues? Talk to your physician and your supervisor.