Eastern Ergonomics

A Solution to Healthcare Transfer Injuries

Benjamin Couch

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elumenEd

First published by elumenEd Press 2025

First edition

This book was professionally typeset on Reedsy.
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Introduction: IHOP Intuition

Someone started to fall, and I only had a split second to react.

We were at a packed IHOP in Dallas, waiting for a table. It was one of those early mornings before advanced martial arts training. Each month I flew to Texas to train with my instructor and we always went to the same IHOP, grabbed the same table, ordered the lousy coffee, and made plans for how I was going to get beat up this time.

As we were waiting to be seated, I was standing next to a senior from another party. He looked steady... until his leg suddenly buckled. His eyes went wide. Time slowed. In that instant, all the "what if" stories I'd heard from nurses and healthcare workers about injuries during patient transfers flashed through my mind.

The feeling was all too familiar—watching someone lose balance, feeling helpless for a second, your own heart catching in your chest, unsure whether stepping in will make things better or worse.

But before he toppled, my body moved on its own. Years of practicing Japanese jujutsu just kicked in. I didn't haul him up with brute strength. I stepped in, moved my body into the right spot, shifted his momentum, and with barely any effort, stood him back upright. He blinked, surprised. "You're quicker than you look," he joked, trying to brush it off, but I felt relief more than anything.

That moment stuck with me. I started thinking back to the stories I'd heard from healthcare workers. The nurse who wrecked her back during a transfer. The med tech who had to quit after one wrong move. I realized I was sitting on something that almost no one in western healthcare had ever seen—simple ways to move people, not with muscle, but with natural body mechanics that martial artists use.

Trying to figure out how to teach this to people who aren't lifelong martial artists was tough. I spent years breaking down techniques—testing, tweaking, and sharing. I talked with staff in hospitals and clinics, watched transfer after transfer, and learned where things usually fell apart.

Now, instead of dreading those "what if" moments, I'm excited to share these tools with healthcare teams. People using this method have fewer injuries, less missed work, and most importantly, don't have to choose between helping others and keeping themselves safe.

If you've ever worried about getting injured helping a patient, or you've seen coworkers get hurt and felt there had to be a better way, you're in the right place.

Stick with me for the next few pages—I'm going to share tips you can use right away to stay safe and help your team do the same.

1

The One-Minute Stretch Routine Anyone Can Do—No Experience Needed

As a nurse or caregiver, your body is your most important tool. Every day, you lift, bend, reach, and move in ways that put tremendous strain on your back and joints. Whether you're helping patients transfer from bed to wheelchair, spending long hours hunched over paperwork, or standing for extended periods during procedures, your spine bears the brunt of these physical demands.

Back injuries are unfortunately common in healthcare settings – so common that many professionals accept aches and pains as simply "part of the job." But they don't have to be. The key to preventing these injuries isn't found in expensive equipment or lengthy training sessions. Instead, it lies in something much simpler: keeping your body flexible and prepared throughout your shift.

The stretches I'm about to share can be done anywhere – at the nurses' station, in a patient room, or even while walking down a hallway. They require no special equipment, take just minutes to complete, and can be performed so unobtrusively that your colleagues might not even notice. Most importantly, they work with your schedule, not against it.

Your body wasn't designed to stay in one position all day. Yet whether you're lifting patients, hunched over paperwork, or standing for hours, that's exactly what most of us end up doing. The result? Stiff muscles, aching joints, and a higher risk of injury when we finally do need to move quickly or lift something heavy.

But here's the good news: you can change this in just one minute.

Let's start with something everyone can do right now:

Take a minute to stand up and try these stretches. You'll feel better if you do!

- Neck and shoulders: gently turn, tip, and roll your neck.
- Neck and shoulders: Shrug your shoulders up toward your ears, then relax them and let them drop.
- Obliques (the sides of the your torso): Stretch one arm overhead and lean to the side, then switch.
- Hips: Pretend you're using a hula hoop for a few slow hip circles.
- Knees and Ankles: Bend your knees slightly, put your hands on them, and move them around in circles.
- Calf and hamstring (back of leg): Place your hands on a wall,

step one foot back, keep your back heel down, and press gently to stretch.

- Quadriceps (front of thigh): Put one hand on the wall to balance yourself. Lift one foot, hold your ankle, and pull your heel to your butt (use a wall or chair for balance if you need it).

All together, these simple stretches take about a minute or two. You can pick just a couple favorites to work out the tight spots.

You don't need a mat, special clothes, or even much space.

You don't have to stop what you're doing for long—just work in a stretch here and there during your shift, and it adds up.

Here's why this matters, no matter what you do for work:

Imagine trying to start your car on a frozen morning. If you don't let the engine warm up, the ride feels stiff and the parts have to work harder.

Your body is the same. Go too long without moving, and things get stiff.

If you're helping move patients, standing at a desk, or even playing music, the same rules apply. When muscles and joints get cold, you're more likely to strain something.

Whether the work is heavy or light, stiff muscles are riskier muscles.

I have a saying: A flexible caregiver is a safer caregiver.

You don't have to set aside a lot of time or be an athlete. If you build in little stretch breaks during your shift, you're less likely to get hurt.

Try adding a few of these quick stretches each day, and you'll feel the difference—during your shift and long after you go home.

2

How Better Breathing Can Make Patient Transfers Safer and Easier

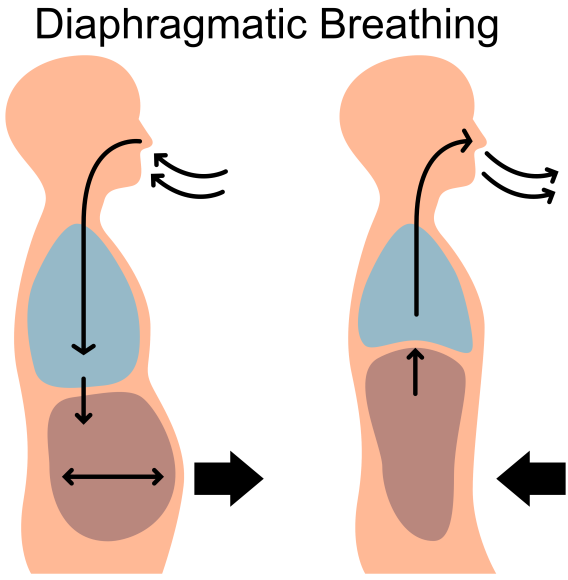
Most people don't think twice about their breathing—until it gets hard.

But did you know that the way you breathe can actually make you stronger and safer while moving patients?

Try this right now:

- Take a slow, deep breath by letting your belly puff out as you inhale.
- Pause for a second.
- Now, as you start to exhale, let your belly flatten.
- Repeat this a few times.

That's called diaphragmatic breathing, and it's the key to more strength and less strain during transfers.



As you inhale, let your belly fill like a balloon. As you exhale, flatten your stomach.

Here's why it matters:

Think about a time in your life when your breath made a difference.

Maybe you were about to lift something heavy, run a race, or even calm yourself before a tough conversation.

In almost every case, your body and brain work better when you breathe on purpose.

It's like giving your muscles and nerves the green light to work together.

Early on in my martial arts journey, I learned that breath isn't just about getting air—it pulls everything together, making even difficult tasks more doable.

One thing to remember: **If you hold your breath or inhale right as you start a hard task, you actually make things tougher for your body.**

Instead, moving with your exhale gives you more power and keeps your body steady.

This is just as true for a nurse helping with a transfer as it is for a black belt breaking boards or a track star running sprints.

Here's a quick line I go back to: **Your breath is your built-in safety switch—use it well, and you stay in control.**

Let me show you how I discovered this under pressure.

For years, I thought power in martial arts came from shouting during a move.

If you've seen karate movies, you know the sound: "Hiya!" That shout is called kiai.

But after decades of training, a senior instructor shared something that flipped my thinking.

He said, "The real kiai isn't about shouting. It's about EVERY piece of you—muscle, focus, breath, and intention—coming together right when you need it. It's a way of being, not just a noise you make. Put your breath together with your body and your intention, and you'll be amazed."

That changed my practice forever.

Suddenly, as I brought my full intention to every breath, I felt stronger. I found that breathing out as I moved brought everything together.

I started using this with every lift, every grab, every transfer.

It wasn't flashy, but it worked.

Even when the job got tough, or I was tired, exhaling through the tough part kept me steady and cut the strain in half.

So, next time you're about to lift, pull, or transfer a patient, set yourself up first:

- Inhale, puff up your belly, then as you move, exhale and let your belly flatten.
- Breathe out with every bit of effort.

The main takeaway is simple:

You can make every transfer safer and easier by learning to breathe with the movement.

It's a tool you've had all along—now you know how to use it.

Keep this in mind:

Your breath is your body's built-in safety switch.

Use it well, and you'll notice the difference in every shift.

3

Get Grounded: The Surprising Posture Fix for Safer Patient Transfers

It's time to talk about posture and how we position our bodies to have the most strength and best structure. We're going to start from the ground up, with how our feet build the base.

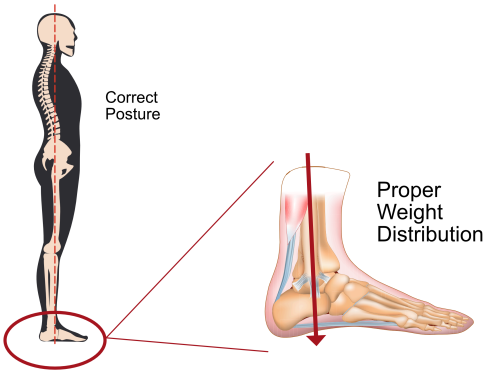
Let's start with something simple that changes everything about how you move people:

When you want to be firm and grounded, stand with your pinkie toes pointing forward, not your big toes.

Don't try to walk this way unless it's your natural gait, but when you're standing still and trying to establish a strong position, pointing the pinkie toes forward gives you far more stability.

Keep your weight centered just a little in front of your heels—not all the way forward on your toes, and definitely not leaning back. When you do this, your body lines up and you'll feel solid, balanced, and steady.

Sounds almost too basic, right? But this is the foundation for every safe and easy move you'll ever make.



With proper posture, your ears will be over your shoulders, which are over you hips, which are over your knees. Your weight will then naturally come to rest just in front of your heels.

As much as you can, work to keep your line of structure intact from your ears all the way down to your feet like you see in the picture above.

Why is this so important? Think about any building you've ever seen. Whether it's a house or a hospital, it won't stand straight for long if the foundation is off. The same goes for your body. A solid base keeps you upright and safe—and when you're moving a patient, that safe start makes all the difference.

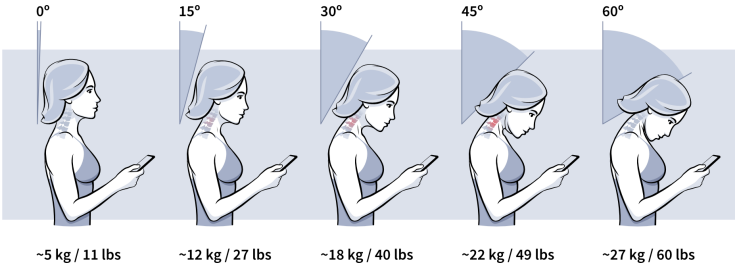
This principle doesn't just pop up in healthcare. Watch a basketball player shooting free throws. Notice their feet? Evenly planted, weight balanced, never wobbling. Or a kid learning to ride a bike—if her feet aren't positioned well, she'll go down with the first wrong move.

Good posture and grounding matter everywhere, not just at work.

Here's the bottom line you can remember: **The way you stand**

decides whether things go smoothly, or someone gets hurt.

In martial arts class, my posture was always something I struggled with. I spent years hunched over books and a computer, my head cranked down, my back slouched. If you had peered into any training session, you would have heard my instructor call out from across the mat, "Chin up, Ben!"



As your head tilts forward, your body becomes less stable like a leaning skyscraper, and your neck takes on an exponential amount of strain. Watch out for this especially with electronic devices!

At first, it felt awkward to stand tall. But over time, that little change lit up every part of my practice. Power and balance I'd never felt before started showing up when I needed them most. My movements got sharper. My workouts became easier, too—literally everything felt stronger.

And here's where it gets important for you and your team: I brought those same basics into healthcare. It was a game changer. People who had always struggled with lifting or moving patients were suddenly steady and prepared—not because they hit the gym but because they changed how they stood.

Nurses who worked all shifts—night or day—saw real results.

"I'm not bracing for pain every time I help someone move," one CNA told me. "I just feel planted for once."

It's such a small change, but it pays off every day.

Here's what you should take away from this: **Your posture is the one thing you can control no matter how busy your shift is.** Start with your pinkie toes forward, center your weight, stand tall—your body (and your patients) will thank you.

When you nail this, you set the stage for everything else to get easier—starting from your very next shift.

Ready for the next tip? Keep going.

4

The Power of Pushing Over Pulling: Save Your Back, Help More People

Next time you need to move a patient, don't pull with your arms—push with your elbows.

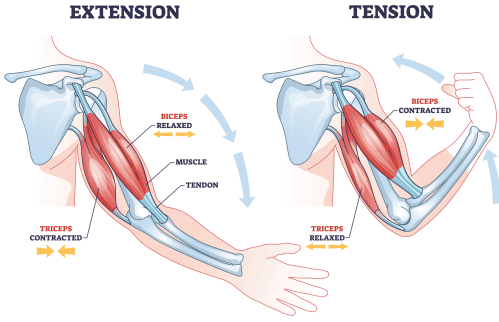
Most people think the best way to help someone stand or transfer is to grab and pull them close. It feels instinctive. You grab the gait belt and then use your arms and back to pull or guide them. That's what we've seen done a thousand times, so that's what almost everyone does.

But here's the problem—pulling mostly works your biceps, shoulders, and lower back. These muscles get tired fast, and they're easy to injure. Worse, when you're pulling, you're fighting gravity, using the weakest parts of your body to move a heavy load. It's no wonder so many healthcare workers end up with strains, aches, or even long-term injuries.

Now, I want you to think about how you'd get up from a deep, soft chair. You probably lean forward and push off with your elbows or your hands against your knees, not just yank yourself up by pulling. That's because your body knows how to use your strongest muscles—your triceps and upper back—when you

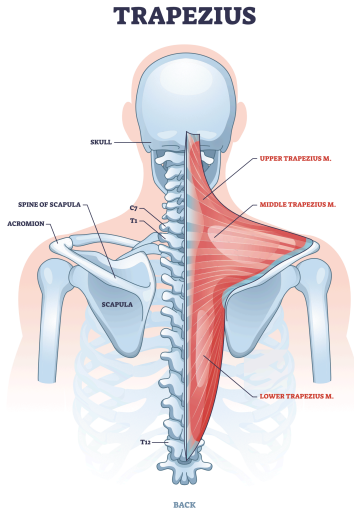
move yourself.

This isn't just a healthcare trick. It's a body trick. Pushing uses stronger muscles, and pushing reduces the risk of hurting yourself.



Biceps are the "pulling" muscles that look impressive on bodybuilders, but they are actually not very strong. Avoid using these in favor of the much larger and stronger "pushing" triceps.

Here's the one-liner to remember: **Push, don't pull—let your stronger muscles do the work.**



When you push with your triceps, you can also slightly squeeze your shoulder blades together to activate the powerful trapezius muscles.

Let me tell you a story from the martial arts world. I coach new students all the time, some half my age and twice my size. When they try to muscle me around, they want to pull with all their might. It just burns them out. You should see their mouths gape and their eyes light up when I move them around easily: they can't tell what I'm doing differently than them, but I'm showing my secret here: I push with my arms, even when it looks like I'm pulling!

One time, I worked with a nurse who kept injuring her shoulder. She'd always pulled her patients up when she had to assist them. After one of our trainings, she tried switching to elbow push, just like we do on the mats. At first, it felt strange—"Am I really supposed to be moving them this way?" she asked. After

a few tries, she moved a larger patient with way less effort. Best of all, she didn't feel that usual strain in her lower back.

You don't just have to take my word for it—use this next time you help someone stand, transfer, or move in bed. Put your hands in position, and imagine pushing backwards with your elbows, instead of pulling like a tug of war. Support the person using your triceps and upper back, and move as one connected piece. Try it—it'll likely feel easier from the very start.

Remember: **Pushing with strong muscles is safer and more efficient than pulling with weak ones.**

It's a simple shift, but it can make your work a whole lot easier, and your body will thank you in the long run.

After learning this, you're probably already thinking about the last time your back ached after a transfer. The next tip I'll share will help you get even more out of each move. Keep going—this gets easier with every new habit you add.

5

Move From Your Center of Gravity: Less Strain, More Control

Even if we're pushing with our upper bodies, like we talked about in the last chapter, even our strongest muscles have limits. If we want to have safe transfers, we need to take that movement and add the concept of moving from our centers.

Most healthcare workers stand next to a patient, reach out, and then try to lift, shift, or steady using only arm strength. It's what we're taught from day one. But if you ever felt like you're fighting an uphill battle with every transfer or worried your arms might give out, you know that's not a workable long-term plan.

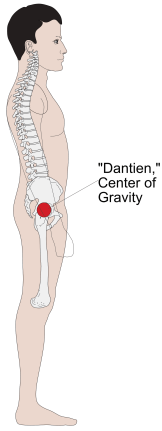
Here's the shift: move from your center of gravity—not just from your arms or shoulders. In Chinese martial arts, we call this area the "dantien." It's about three inches below your belly button, and it's where your body's power naturally sits. When you shift your center of gravity with the person you're moving, your whole body moves as one, instead of fighting against itself. Suddenly, you're not straining with small muscles—your whole weight and bone structure do the work for you. That tiny

difference changes everything.

Think about trying to open a really heavy door. If you only pull on the door handle with your fingers, it barely budges. But if you step in close, put your hip behind it, and use the strength of your whole body, the door swings open much easier. We're wired to move big things most easily when our center is behind the effort, not just our hands.

This isn't just for moving people. Every day, you use your center whether you realize it or not. When you carry a bag of groceries tucked close to your body, you use your center to hold the weight. When you lose your balance and recover, it's your middle that catches you.

Here's a phrase to remember: **Strong centers make for safe transfers.**



Remember that story from the introduction about my experience at IHOP, when the gentleman beside me started going down fast.

I didn't try to yank him back upright with my arms. Instead, my instinct was to root my feet, line up my center with his, and guide his weight through my middle. It took barely any effort from my arms. It was almost automatic. In a crowded space, where I could barely move, I steadied both of us at once.

Another time, a friend of mine—a nurse named Tom—shared how fatigued he felt after every shift. He said his arms and back hurt constantly from helping patients move. We worked together, and I showed him how to line up his body so his center was connected to the patient's center. Instead of bending over and struggling to use just his arms, he stepped in closer, bent his knees, and let his body's balance do the heavy lifting. A few shifts later, he called me and said, "This feels like cheating. I feel like I'm finally working with my body, not against it."

The takeaway is simple: **Moving from your center takes pressure off your arms and back, and lets you help anyone—big or small—without risking injuries.**

Try this next time you support someone in a transfer. Get as close as you safely can and focus on moving from just below your belly button. Steady yourself first, then guide your whole body, not just your arms. Notice how much lighter the workload feels.

Remember: **Strong centers build safe workplaces—and you don't have to be a bodybuilder to move someone well.**

Practice this and you'll notice the difference right away.

Keep reading—we're going to keep connecting the dots, so every transfer feels safe and effortless.

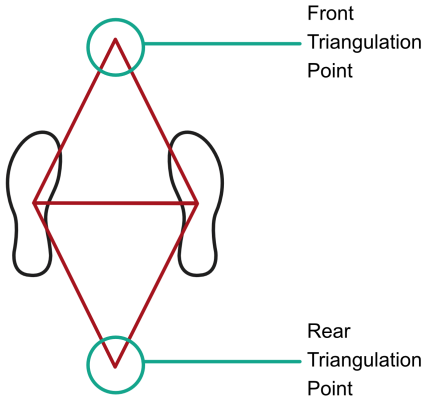
6

Find Your Strong Spot: How to Avoid Falls By Shifting Your Base

If you want to stay balanced during a patient transfer, pay attention to where your weak spot is—then make sure it isn't in the way.

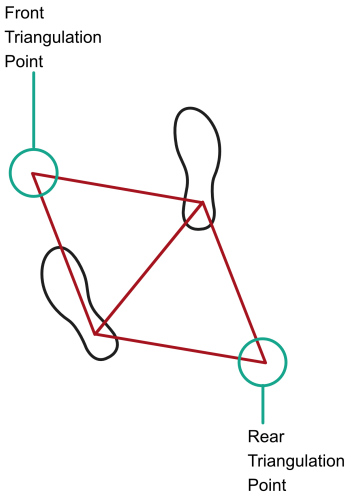
Here's what I mean.

Because we walk on two legs, we all have a point on the floor where our balance is weakest. Picture your feet as two corners of a triangle. The third point, either in front of you or behind you, is your trouble spot. If your weight shifts there, you're likely to tip or stumble. That's true whether you're helping someone up or just standing on the bus.



But here's where things get interesting: you don't have to get rid of that weak spot—you just have to keep it out of the way during a transfer.

If you plant your feet wide and square, but the direction of movement lines up with your triangle's tip, you're setting yourself up for trouble. Move that point out of the action, and suddenly you have a stable base—with less chance of slipping or losing control.



When you "blade" your body to perform a transfer, you move your weak point out of the way. Now you are moving from a strong base.

Think back to when you started learning to ride a bike. When you pointed the front wheel in a weird direction while trying to pedal, you probably wiped out. But once you learned to set your base—putting your balance in line with where you were going—riding in a straight line was easy. It's the same idea with your feet on the ground. When your base matches your direction, everything works better.

Here's an easy way to remember this for any transfer: **Strong bases keep both you and your patient steady.**

Let's bring this into a real story from the hospital floor.

A nurse I work with was always nervous during stand-assist transfers. Her biggest fear wasn't about strength—it was about slipping and falling. When she set up with her feet side by side,

the transfer path lined up with her weakest spot on the floor. The older adults she was helping sometimes lurched forward, and she'd have to step quickly back to catch her own balance.

After learning about the triangulation point, things changed. She started setting her feet so her weak spot was off to the side, not in the path of the transfer. Amazingly, she felt more secure right away. No sliding or wobbling—just solid, easy movement. She even found it easier to guide her patients, because she wasn't wasting energy worrying about her own footing.

Let me say it again: **When keep your weak triangulation point out of the way, you both have more control and a much better shot at a safe, easy transfer.**

Try it yourself on your next shift, or even at home when getting up from the sofa. Notice where your feet are, and which direction would make you feel unbalanced if you had to move suddenly. Shift so your weak point is out of the path—and you'll notice how much steadier you feel.

You don't have to be a balance expert to use this idea. Keep your strong spot lined up with the action, and you'll move with more confidence every single time.

Keep reading—seeing how these principles fit together is what will help you go from "hoping for the best" to knowing your next transfer will work out for everyone.

7

Step by Step: The Simple Way to Move Patients Without Strain

When you're helping someone from sitting to standing—or moving them anywhere—always remember this:

Move them in steps, not as one big slope.

First, shift their weight forward. Only then help them move up, or over. If you try to lift or pull someone straight up at an angle, it's like trying to haul someone up a playground slide—it just doesn't work well. Their body is going to fight you, and you'll both feel off balance.

Think of the body as a set of stairs, not one long ramp. Each "step" is a little adjustment that adds up to safe, comfortable movement for both of you.

Move the center of gravity forward and up/backward and down. The center has to move first.

Let's take a quick look at an everyday moment...

Ever seen someone try to drag a heavy suitcase up the steps two at a time? It's clumsy, tiring, and often ends in either frustration or a bruised shin. But take it one step at a time—the way the stairs are built—and suddenly, the weight feels lighter and you're not fighting gravity.

Or picture lifting a box. One small lift to bring it closer, another to get it off the ground. If you try to do it all in one swoop, your back will tell you that wasn't the best idea.

That's the heart here: Step by step is easier on your muscles, and makes things safer.

Here's a quick way to remember this: **Move hips before heads. Steps, not slopes.**

Here's how this played out in real life: I was training with

my favorite partner one day, and after two hours of serious effort, we were stuck. We were both tugging and pulling, but no matter how hard we tried, neither of us could throw the other off balance. It became almost laughable. We just kept yanking, thinking brute force would help.

We finally gave up and called over our instructor. Without breaking a sweat, he took us each by the shoulders—gave a gentle nudge, moved our hips, and there we were, sitting on the mat. Shocked, we asked what the trick was.

He grinned and said, "You've been trying to pull each other over like knocking down a tree. But people don't move like that. If you want to help someone go down, move their hips, not their head. Shift their center first, then the rest follows."

Suddenly, it clicked. That's how you guide a patient to sitting, or standing up. First, help them shift their center of gravity forward—let their body do the work. Then, move up. Their own mechanics take it from there, and everything falls in line.

So here's the principle, simple and clear: Start by guiding their hips or shoulders forward in a single small step, let them get balanced, then move to the next step.

It doesn't matter if you're working with someone big, small, or somewhere in between. This approach is safer, easier on your back, and makes you look like you've got a secret nobody else knows.

Give it a try—it'll change how you see every patient transfer from now on.

Ready to put these tips together? Keep reading!

8

Control the Chaos: Mental Focus Techniques That Prevent Mistakes Under Pressure

Let's get right to it:

If you want to keep yourself and your patients safe during transfers, you need to focus not just on your body, but also your mind.

Here are three final ideas from martial arts that instantly boost your focus and help you avoid common mistakes:

Metsuke

"Metsuke" is a Japanese word that means "where you set your gaze."

The most important thing to know: Where you look, you go.

When you're transferring someone, ask them to look forward where you're traveling instead of downward. When their eyes stay forward, so does their movement.

Yi

"Yi" is a Chinese word meaning "intention."

In all types of tasks, your mind should be on your purpose, not scattered.

Chinese martial artists say that "four evils" can mess up our good intention: surprise, fear, doubt, and distraction.

All of these can pull your attention away from the task, making mistakes and injuries much more likely.

In martial arts, it's said: your mind (xin) sets your intention (yi), your intention moves your energy (qi), and your energy leads your motion (li). When you flow through these stages smoothly and without interruption, you'll have great movement and great transfers,.

"Slow is smooth, and smooth is fast."

This phrase is usually attributed to the Navy SEALs, but what does that mean?

When you're stressed or rushed, you're more likely to fumble.

But if you slow down, you stay smooth.

And when things go smoothly, you actually get the job done faster—because you're not making mistakes or having to backtrack.

Think about it in real-life terms:

Picture a moment when you were under pressure—maybe running late, carrying something heavy, and things just kept getting messier.

Every time you got flustered or rushed, what happened?

Keys get dropped, drinks spill, you trip over your own feet.

But when you make yourself slow down and breathe, somehow things fall into place.

That smooth approach ends up saving you time and stress.

Pumping the Brakes

I want to share a story—because these aren't just nice ideas; they've saved me in real life.

A while back, I was driving on the highway. I realized at the last moment that my exit was coming up fast.

Instinct said, "Move now or you'll miss it!"

So I made a snap decision, switched lanes, and managed to get onto the ramp—but it was sharper and shorter than I thought.

Suddenly, I was coming in way too fast for the curve.

Time seemed to slow down.

Instead of panicking, I remembered what years of martial arts had drilled into me:

- Stay calm.
- Don't let fear or surprise throw off your reaction.
- Slow is smooth, and smooth is fast.

I scanned the road. With my back end sliding, I had a split second to pick between slamming into a telephone pole or catching a flimsy road marker.

I aimed for the marker—it left a scratch, but saved me from a potentially fatal hit when the dust settled.

The whole thing was over in seconds, but because I kept my mind steady, I didn't make it worse by flinching or freezing up.

That moment proved what these martial arts ideas can do:

Looking ahead, staying aware, and not letting panic set in

made all the difference.

And believe it or not, the same thing applies to patient care.

If you're ever in a stressful spot while moving someone, remember:

Where your eyes are, your body follows. A clear mind equals confident action. Slow is smooth—and smooth gets things done faster and safer.

You don't need perfect conditions. You just need this little bit of mental discipline to keep control, even when it feels chaotic.

So the next time you're helping a patient—or facing any kind of pressure—keep your eyes forward, your mind clear, and your movements steady.

That's how you stay safe, and help others stay safe, too.

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Start Where You Are

The moment I walked into that tiny Salvation Army gym years ago, I felt completely out of place. The whole place smelled like old sweat and school lunch. There was a row of worn-out mats along the wall, a few droopy basketball nets, and a ragged punching bag that had seen better days.

I had just volunteered to teach the martial arts class for that building after the last teacher had been fired. Half the class hated me for replacing their old teacher, and the other half wished they were playing basketball instead.

It would've been easy to walk out, but I kept showing up. A lot of these kids had never had anyone show up for them consistently in their lives. I decided I was going to be someone they could count on, whether they liked me or not.

Funny thing—those classes taught me more than any seminar or book. I had to answer kids' questions like, "Why does this move work better?" or "That wouldn't work for real, would it?" each time learning a little more myself.

20 years later, I'm still teaching. Some of those kids who started with me are black belts now. That class has become

the place where I know I'm making a difference in the world. I've seen a generation of kids grow up into fine adults, and I've grown up a lot too.

My life is immeasurably greater because I said yes to that opportunity.

If I'd done nothing—if I waited for some perfect moment or a sign—I'd have missed all of that. No chance to get better, no impact, and definitely no late-night weird texts from students who just figured out a move that had been bothering them.

It's tempting to wait, let excuses pile up, or think you need more training before you start. But the folks who take action—even just a small step, even if it's messy—are the ones who make a difference.

I see it every single time I teach a new course. The ones who show up and try the moves, help each other, and ask all the goofy questions are the ones who go back to work and come home pain-free.

If that fire's in you—if you're ready to break the pattern of staff injuries and make things easier for your team—sign up for the in-person course. Start simple, or level up and teach others. Make it real in your world.

And if not? Please, just use one tip you learned here today. Try it, share it, tweak it until it sticks. Little actions add up fast.

No matter what, you deserve to move forward. The best reward goes to the folks who step up. Thanks for reading—and for being someone who wants to do better.

Afterword: Where do we go from here?

Thank you for reading this guide. If these strategies made sense to you, and you'd like more help putting them into practice, the next step is simple.

If you want to finally put an end to costly staff injuries and make your workplace safer, sign up for my in-person course.

Choose from two levels:

- **Level One** is a one-day, hands-on training to master safe patient transfers and protect your own health. Perfect for caregivers and nurses who want practical, confident movement and real coaching.
- Or, go further with **Level Two**—for leaders who want to train others. You'll get extra training on teaching these proven techniques, support for a full year, and a license to bring this method to your own facility.

You already know the cost of a single injury can be massive—lost staff, patient risk, a blow to your facility's reputation, and up to $120,000 to replace a lost nurse. When you invest in your team's safety, the impact is wide-reaching.

Reading about these ideas and practicing on your own is a fantastic way to get started, but just imagine how much you could take away from a class that meets in person, one where you could get actual physical guidance and feedback. That's

what my Level 1 and Level 2 courses provide.

If you're ready for less pain, less stress, fewer sick days, and a stronger team, check out the course details and secure your spot.

Want extra support or have questions? I'm here—just reach out to ben.couch@elumened.com.

Thanks again for reading and for taking the first steps toward a safer, healthier workplace.

Book a Seminar

Body movement is tough to learn from a book, or even from a video call. To get the most out of it, you've got to feel it and be checked by a pro. This text is a great start, but you can't get the full benefit from reading alone. It works best when paired with an in-person course.

If you're serious about cutting down the risk of injury for yourself or in your workplace, I can help with an ergonomics program that you won't find anywhere else. It took me decades to compile this information from upper-echelon instructors, and no one else has applied these principles to the healthcare industry yet.

If you're serious about safety, if you're committed to the health of yourself and your staff, and if you want to be on the cutting edge of a new industry standard, then we need to talk.

Sincerely,

Ben Couch

ben.couch@elumened.com | www.easternergonomics.com

Additional Resources

If you want to read more about the concepts I'm talking about here, you won't find this information in any books related to the healthcare industry. Instead, you'll have to read titles from some of the top traditional martial artists in the world.

If you want to learn how to apply their concepts to healthcare, I'm the expert who bridges both of these worlds in a way that radically impacts healthcare for the better.

I'm listing works from some authors and instructors who have been influential in my practice. They may be helpful, and they may raise many more questions for you.

When you're ready, get in touch. I have the answers.

Supplemental Reading

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About the Author

Ben spent over 20 years leading the training program for a national group of retirement communities, creating educational programs that touched the lives of tens of thousands of health-care professionals.

He has also been a martial artist since 1984, earning black belts in seven disciplines, including a seventh-degree black belt in karate. He is the head of the Karasu Budo Kyokai organization and has been teaching his own martial arts programs for over 25 years.

In 2024, he founded elumenEd to bring this unique blend of expertise to direct care providers—starting with the Eastern Ergonomics program.

Ben Couch, Owner of elumenEd