

Pulling a Patient Up in Bed



Think of ways you can decrease friction to make this move more comfortable for the patient and to reduce the stress on your back. It's easier to slide a patient up in bed by using a draw sheet and two people. It's better to wait for help than to risk injury to the patient or yourself. If the patient is conscious, explain what you are going to do and how they can help with that.



Step 1. Grasp the drawsheet

- Put the head of the bed down and adjust the top of the bed to waist- or hip-level of the shorter person.
- Be sure no catheters or other tubes are attached to the sheets.
- Be sure the wheels of the bed are locked.
- Grasp the drawsheet. Point one foot in the direction you're moving the patient.

Step 2. Pull up

- Ask the patient to cross their arms over their chest.
- Lean in the direction of the move.
- On the count of three, lift and pull the patient up. Lift with your legs and use your body weight. Repeat this step as many times as needed to position the patient.
- The patient can also bend their knees, push down with their feet, and pull up with a trapeze (a device overhead) to help.

Remember

- Putting a pillow under your patient's feet helps them push down, making it easier for you to pull them up.
- Never clasp the underarms to move the patient. This may cause injury, such as shoulder dislocation.
- Don't try to stand by the head of the bed and pull the patient up.

- If the patient weighs more than 200 pounds, consider a different technique using assistive devices or at least three people.
- Be careful to avoid sheer force. This is especially important for patients with bed sores (decubitus ulcers). You should do more lifting and less pulling.
- Patients tend to slide down in their bed when the head of the bed is elevated. A pillow under their knees should help them slide less.

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