



Training Solutions, Delivered!

ELEMENTS OF BACK CARE

(Healthcare Version)

**Leader's Guide, Fact Sheet
& Quiz**

Item Number: 3548
CLMI Training

This easy-to-use Leader's Guide is provided to assist in conducting a successful presentation.

PREPARING FOR THE MEETING

Here are a few suggestions for using this program:

- a) Review the contents of the Fact Sheet that immediately follows this page to familiarize yourself with the program topic and the training points discussed in the program. The Fact Sheet also includes a list of Program Objectives that details the information that participants should learn from watching the program.
- b) If required by your organization, make an attendance record to be signed by each participant to document the training to be conducted.
- c) Prepare the area and equipment to be used for the training. Make sure the watching environment is comfortable and free from outside distractions. Also, ensure that participants can see and hear the TV screen or computer monitor without obstructions.
- d) Make copies of the Review Quiz included at the end of this Leader's Guide to be completed by participants at the conclusion of the presentation. Be aware that the page containing the answers to the quiz comes before the quiz itself, which is on the final page.

CONDUCTING THE PRESENTATION

- a) Begin the meeting by welcoming the participants. Introduce yourself and give each person an opportunity to become acquainted if there are new people joining the training session.
- b) Introduce the program by its title and explain to participants what they are expected to learn as stated in the Program Objectives of the Fact Sheet.
- c) Play the program without interruption. Upon completion, lead discussions about your organization's specific policies regarding the subject matter. Make sure to note any unique hazards associated with the program's topic that participants may encounter while performing their job duties at your facility.
- d) Hand out copies of the review quiz to all of the participants and make sure each one completes it before concluding the training session.

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FACT SHEET

LENGTH: 18 MINUTES

PROGRAM SYNOPSIS:

Healthcare workers are committed to giving people the best care possible, but they are often so busy taking care of others that they don't take care of themselves. A major problem frequently overlooked by these employees is the risk of spinal injuries. Because the healthcare industry has some of the highest back injury rates, workers need to be aware of the challenges in maintaining a healthy spine and how to properly care for their backs to prevent back pain. That's the purpose of this program—to discuss the various strategies healthcare workers can use to keep their backs healthy.

Topics include the importance of preparing our backs to prevent injuries, stretching and exercises that prepare the major muscle groups for work, good body mechanics, the chair to bed transfer and the bed to chair transfer.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES:

After watching the program, the participant will be able to explain the following:

- Why it is important to prepare our backs for the work we do;
- How to perform four stretches and other exercises to prepare our major muscle groups for work;
- Which body mechanics, including safe lifting techniques, to use to prevent back injuries;
- How to transfer patients from wheelchairs to beds and vice versa.

INSTRUCTIONAL CONTENT:

OPENING DISCUSSION

- The program opens with Michelle and Sam discussing the discomfort he is experiencing in his back after picking up one of his daughter's dolls.
- Michelle tells Sam that she is not a bit surprised about Sam's pain since "this sort of thing happens all the time."
- "Toys, newspapers, picking up any object can trigger a back injury, right? Wrong!" Michelle continues. "A single event may trigger the pain, but the reality is the injury has been a long time coming."
- When Sam says he has never had a back problem before, Michelle replies, "Maybe not, but there are a lot of things we do that put our back at risk for injury."

THE IMPORTANCE OF PREPARING OUR BACKS FOR THE WORK WE DO

- As a healthcare worker, you have a challenging job and there are many aspects of it that are out of your control. Yet, in spite of these challenges, you're committed to giving people the best care possible.
- In fact, this can be part of the problem. You're often so busy taking care of others that you don't take care of yourself.
- What we want to do today is increase your awareness of how to take better care of yourself on the job by making you aware of how you can hurt yourself and show you some ways to avoid injury.
- A little background before we get into specifics. As you may already know, 80 percent of American adults suffer from back pain at some time in their life and healthcare, your industry, has some of the highest back injury rates. Only truck drivers have more injuries. That's why it's important to know how to prepare your body for the work you have to do.
- How do you do that? With three strategies: stretching and exercise, good body mechanics and improved techniques to transfer people.
- Once you increase your awareness and adjust your habits in these three areas, you'll find your body is more prepared to handle the challenges of your job.
- "I think it's true that we often get so caught up in getting our work done that we forget to think about the impact on our bodies," says Michelle.
- "That's right," responds Sam. "Let's take a look at our first strategy, stretching and exercise and see how that can help to make a difference."

WHY STRETCHING & EXERCISE ARE IMPORTANT FOR HEALTHCARE WORKERS

- Athletes are a common analogy that's used to relate the importance of stretching and exercise to the work you do and we all know how athletes prepare for competition.
- For people in the healthcare industry, stretching and exercise are even more important. You're working with people who have mobility problems, illness or who need assistance with every aspect of their daily care. This type of work demands the most from your body and exercise and stretching are two of the best ways you can prevent injury and minimize fatigue.
- So how do you fit this in, working long shifts and with all the things you do at home? The great thing about exercise and stretching is that it doesn't take a lot to make a real difference.
- Stretching is important because it loosens and warms up the muscles, helping them prepare for the work you need them to do. People often don't realize how important stretching is. You can't expect top performance from your muscles without gradually easing them into it.

STRETCHING & EXERCISE

- The following four stretches prepare the major muscle groups you use in your job and you can do them in about five minutes.
- The hamstring stretch loosens the back of your thighs. Never bounce when you stretch. Move slowly, steadily and under control.
- The low-back stretch encourages flexibility and gets your back ready for lifting. As you stretch, continue to breathe normally and under control; don't hold your breath.
- The side stretch works both your side and abdominal muscles. Remember to do the stretch in each direction. It shouldn't hurt. If you feel any pain, try not to stretch so far or make sure you're using correct technique.
- The quad stretch loosens your front hip and thigh muscles so your legs are ready for lifting. You should hold each position for 12 to 15 seconds and do each stretch three times.
- This may sound time consuming, but you can easily do this whole series of stretches in about five minutes and it can make a big difference in reducing your risk of injury.
- When you're on your feet all day, exercise doesn't sound so appealing, but swimming, biking or other exercise before or after work will increase your energy level and help your body be ready for the physical activity your job requires. It can also help relieve stress if you've had a tough day.
- Again, remember that you don't need to put in a lot of time to make a difference. Stretch when you get up in the morning and periodically your day. Find a time to exercise that's easy for you to fit into your daily routine. Remember to take the time to take care of yourself, then you'll have the strength and stamina to care for the people who really need you.
- "It's easy to forget what a difference stretching and exercise can make," says Sam.
- "That's right," adds Michelle. "And it can even help prevent injuries with activities that you do at home. And when it comes to back injuries, many times it's not what you do, but how you do it that leads to problems."
- That's where body mechanics comes in," notes Sam. "Good body mechanics helps your body make physical movements without the stress and strain that can lead to injury."

GOOD BODY MECHANICS

- The idea that you have choices in your work can be difficult to imagine, especially when you've got a number of people to care for or if your shift is shorthanded. But one area where you do have a choice is how you do your work and that's where body mechanics can make a difference.
- Body mechanics is based on the principle that your body is designed to make a number of movements and how you move can be the difference between health and injury.
- Your spine is shaped like an "S" and is naturally designed to be a shock absorber. Without getting into all of the anatomy, we know that your spine and back muscles are the strongest when they are properly aligned in what we call the natural or neutral position.
- There are two basic body mechanics principles that help your back function and move the way it's supposed to without adding unnecessary stress.
- They are 1) keep the load, whether it's an object or a person, close to your body and 2) keep the natural curve in your back.

- Here's how these two principles protect your back. Anything held away from your body is heavier to lift, seven to 10 times heavier. This is called the lever arm effect.
- Because the object is heavier, the pressure on your back is increased 10 times. You're lifting 100 pounds instead of 10. Keeping the load close reduces the amount of force needed to lift; this also reduces the pressure on your spine.
- Keeping your back in its natural curve equalizes the pressure on the discs in your lower back. It also places the back muscles, vertebrae and ligaments in their strongest and most efficient range. The result is less chance of injury.
- Another tip is to look up as you begin to lift. This automatically helps put your spine in its natural alignment.
- Twisting is another movement that can cause injury. When you twist, the weight of your upper body combined with the weight of what you're lifting adds four times the amount of pressure on your back.
- To avoid twisting your back, take a wide stance and pivot with your feet instead, keeping your shoulders and hips in alignment. This will help prevent injuries. Those are the basic principles of body mechanics.
- You need body mechanics most at the times when you are at the greatest risk of injury. These include when you're tired, when you're rushed and when you're short of help.
- Your awareness of these risk factors is extremely important because that's when you need to stop a minute, only a moment, and think "Okay, how can I reduce the risk to my back? How can I make this less stressful to my body?" That's how body mechanics can help you avoid injury.
- Good body mechanics is not just for on-the-job challenges either. If you remember to incorporate these techniques at home, you'll go a long way toward preventing the cumulative effects that can lead to injury.
- Stretching, warming up, exercising and using the proper body mechanics are some of the things you can do to prevent injuries, but isn't the real trick finding ways to apply these principles on the job?
- Finding the best possible way to perform a task can make life a lot easier for your back. Let's see how we can apply body mechanics and lifting techniques to real world situations.

THE CHAIR TO BED TRANSFER

- In the healthcare environment, the biggest challenge is the safe transfer of people. There are a number of factors that impact your ability to do this efficiently and safely.
- First, take into account the status of the person to be transferred. Consider their size, weight, age, physical condition, mental status, medical or surgical limitations, such as IVs, catheters or wounds, and orthopedic limits such as their ability to bear weight.
- Next, consider your own abilities such as your size, strength, experience and level of energy. Then evaluate the room, equipment, personnel and time available. Considering all these factors can help you determine the best and safest method for transferring someone.
- We went out to a healthcare location so we could show some typical types of transfer. The first demonstrates a one person, pivot assist transfer from a chair to a bed.
- In this case, the person is alert, cooperative, has no medical or orthopedic limits and is able to assist during the transfer. Make sure the bed is against the wall or the brakes on the bed are locked.
- Position the wheelchair so the person will move toward their strong side. Lock the wheelchair into position.
- Explain the procedure to the person as you place the transfer belt securely around their waist. It's important for people who are able to do as much of the transfer as possible. This gives the person exercise as well as makes them feel less dependent. It also puts you at less risk of injury.
- To transfer, place your inner leg between the person's leg. This provides a base of support. Reach around the person and grasp the transfer belt slightly behind the hips. Count "one, two, three, stand" and start the lift to the standing position by dropping your rear, keeping your head high and shoulders back.
- Allow your knees to bend as you rock back. As the person reaches a standing position, say "turn" and pivot on your feet. It's very important not to twist your back.
- As the person completes the turn towards the bed, say "sit", lower the person by rocking forward, keeping your head high and shoulders back. Let your rear go back. It provides a counterbalance, so you don't end up in the person's lap.
- This technique will maintain the natural curves in your back. When the person is safely seated, move the wheelchair out of the way and help the person bring their legs onto the bed.

THE BED TO CHAIR TRANSFER

- Another common transfer is the reverse, from the bed to the chair. Be sure to explain the procedure to the person as place the transfer belt securely around their waist.

- Position the wheelchair so the person will move toward their strong side. Lock the wheelchair into position.
- To transfer, place your inner leg between the person's leg; this provides a base of support. Reach around the person and grasp the transfer belt slightly behind the hips. The person may hold lightly onto your upper arms for support.
- Count "one, two, three, stand" and start the lift to the standing position by dropping your rear, keeping your head high and shoulders back. Allow your knees to bend as you rock back.
- As the person reaches a standing position, say "turn" and pivot on your feet. It's very important not to twist your back. As the person completes the turn towards the chair, say "sit."
- Lower the person by rocking forward, keeping your head high and shoulders back. This will maintain the natural curves in your back. Maintaining the natural curves in your back as you transfer people is one of the most important things you can do to prevent an injury.

OTHER METHODS FOR REDUCING THE RISK OF INJURY

- Try to maintain this power position in other transfer situations. There are a number of techniques and procedures for different circumstances. It's important to evaluate the situation and determine what will work best, such as a transfer sheet or if a mechanical lifting device is needed.
- We've seen one technique for one person transfers. By taking into account each person's situation, your own abilities and by using the proper transfer technique, you can reduce your risk of a back injury.
- It's also important to take short breaks and do compensating stretches when you can. A busy schedule and being shorthanded can make this tough, but even a short stretch can make a world of difference to your back.
- No matter what type of work you do, there are ways to improve your body mechanics so there is less strain on your back.
- While your situation may not be perfect, even a slight improvement in technique makes a difference. It's those kinds of tips that are easy to work into your day.

MARKETPLACE PRODUCTS

- There are always ways to improve patient transfer or lifting that can reduce the risk on your back and there are many products on the market that can make transfers easier.
- There are chairs available that can double as toilet and shower stools. This helps eliminate the number of transfers.
- Ambulation belts can help stabilize people while they are walking, reducing the risk of falls.
- Friction-reducing sliding boards can be placed beneath people so they can slide instead of being lifted.
- There are a number of techniques and procedures that are designed for different transfer circumstances. Making use of these devices and techniques can keep your back healthy and ensure the safe transfer of the people you are caring for.

SUMMARY

- There's a lot you can do to prevent back pain and injury and it doesn't take a lot of effort.
- "This helps me a lot, especially the importance of stretching and exercise and the awareness of good body mechanics, keeping the load close, and keeping the natural curves," says Sam. "I just never thought about that before with the things I lift and move. I know I'll do that in the future."
- "It's also really important to use the right lifting technique for the job you're doing," adds Michelle. "And remember to take a short break and do a stretch!"
- "That's right. With so many people like me suffering from back pain, it's good to know there are some simple techniques that we can put to use to keep our backs healthy," Sam concludes.

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ANSWERS TO THE REVIEW QUIZ

1. b

2. c

3. b

4. c

5. a

6. d

7. c

8. a

9. b

10. a

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REVIEW QUIZ

The following questions are provided to determine how well you understand the information presented in this program.

Name _____ Date _____

1. Only _____ have more back injuries than healthcare workers.
 - a. Warehouse workers
 - b. Truck drivers
 - c. Construction workers
2. Which stretch works both your side and abdominal muscles?
 - a. The hamstring stretch
 - b. The low-back stretch
 - c. The side stretch
 - d. The quad stretch
3. You need to put a lot of time into stretching and exercise to make a difference.
 - a. True
 - b. False
4. Holding an object away from your body when lifting increases the pressure on your back _____ times.
 - a. 3
 - b. 5
 - c. 10
5. When you twist while lifting, the weight of your upper body combined with the weight of what you're lifting adds 4 times the amount of pressure on your back.
 - a. True
 - b. False
6. You need good body mechanics most at the times when you are at the greatest risk of injury, which include _____.
 - a. When you're tired
 - b. When you're rushed
 - c. When you're short of help
 - d. All of the above
7. In the healthcare environment, the biggest challenge is _____.
 - a. Transporting heavy medical equipment
 - b. Making time for stretching and exercise
 - c. The safe transfer of people
8. During the transfer of patients, it's important for people who are able to do as much of the transfer as possible because it gives them exercise and makes them feel less dependent.
 - a. True
 - b. False
9. Maintaining the natural curves in your back as you transfer people is NOT important as long as the patient isn't injured during the transfer.
 - a. True
 - b. False
10. It's important to take short breaks and do compensating stretches when you can, even if you're shorthanded or you're schedule is busy.
 - a. True
 - b. False