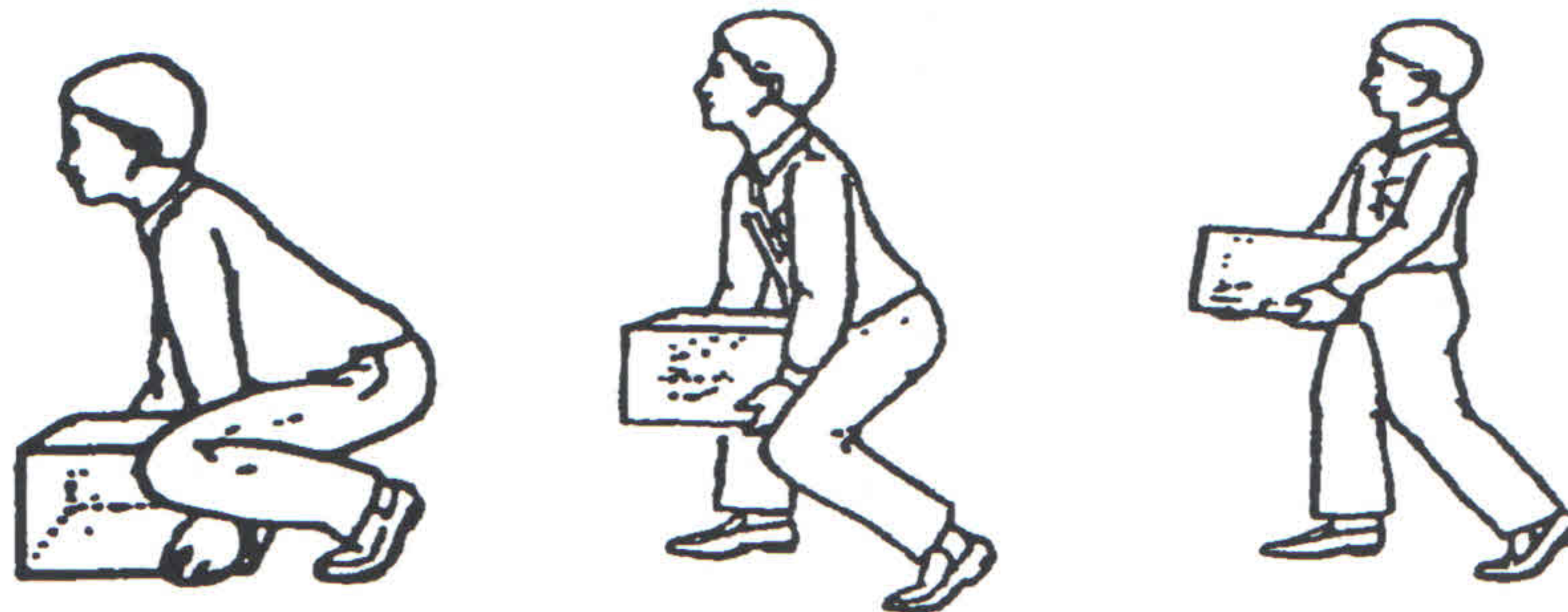


Safe Lifting and Transfer Techniques for Caregivers

The key principles of body mechanics are:

- Plan the move.
- Stand with your feet apart, knees slightly flexed, one foot forward, and your head and trunk upright and in midline.
- Get close to the object or person you plan to lift.
- Tighten your stomach and buttock muscles.
- Tuck your chin and keep your spine in a neutral position with your lower back slightly arched.
- Lift with your legs.
- Move your feet in the direction of movement. Shift your feet and take small steps rather than twisting at the waist.
- Carry weight as close to your own center of gravity as possible.
- Coordinate your movements. Count "1-2-3 lift."



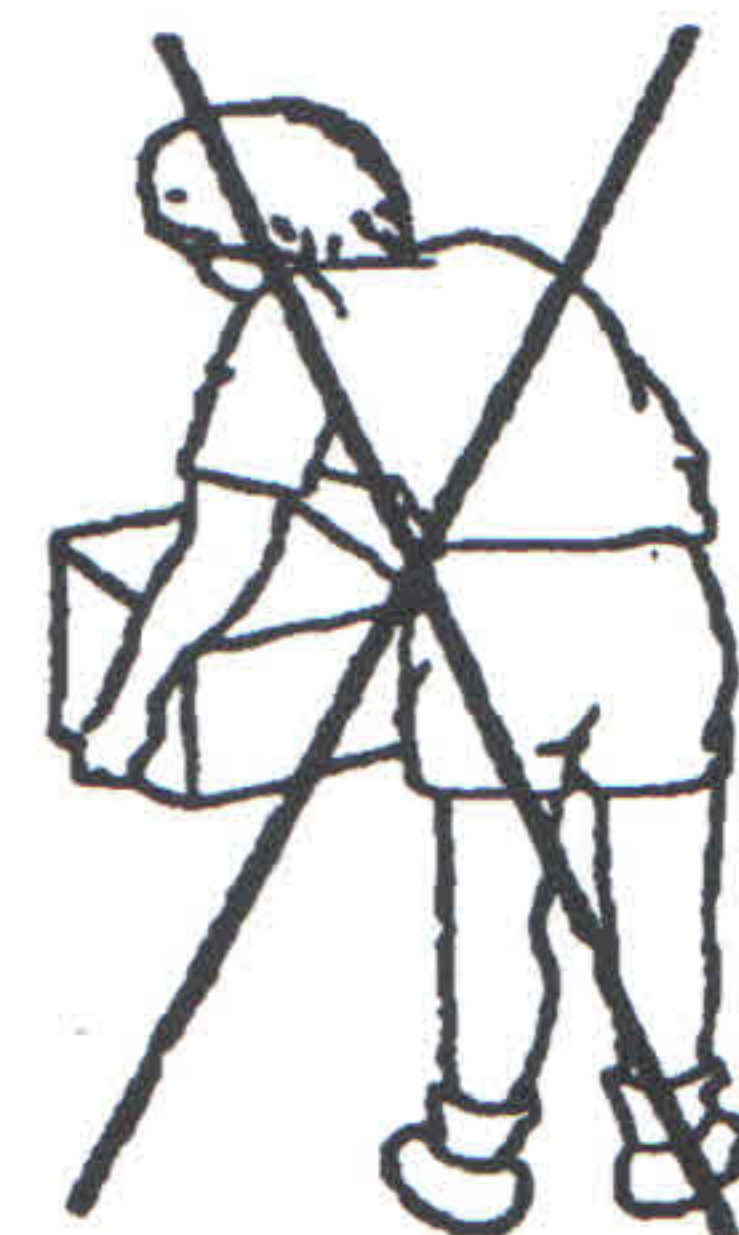
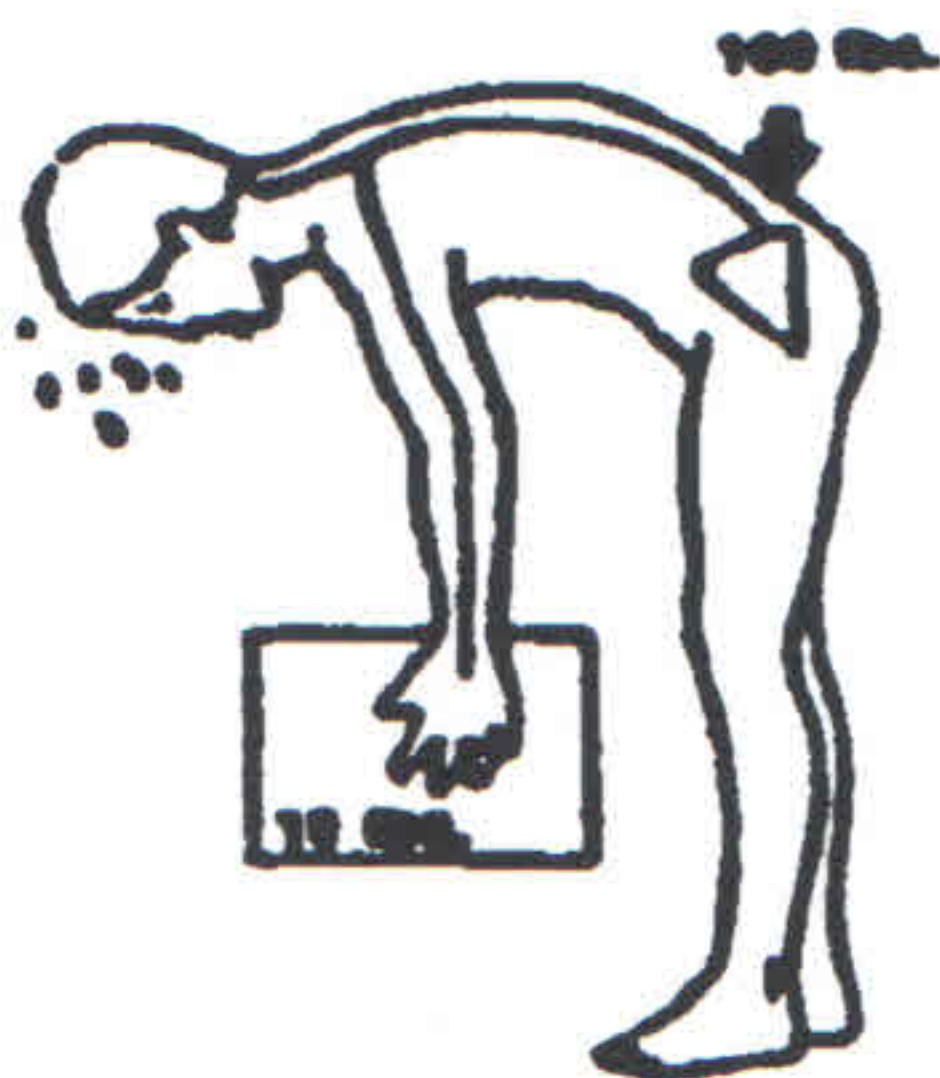
* When using a transfer belt, place it snugly around the person's lower waist. This is to avoid injury to the ribs and soft tissue just under the ribs. Check to be certain it's securely fastened to prevent it from sliding up the person while lifting.

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AVOID these improper techniques which place the caregiver at risk of developing back injury:

- **Lifting with the back bent forward and the legs straight.** This technique places significant stress on the lower back.
- **Using fast jerking motions.** Trying to work too fast can prevent a smooth, safe technique.
- **Bending and twisting at the same time.** Not pivoting the feet and failing to squat when lifting causes maximum stress on the lower back.
- **Handling the load too far away.** The stress of the load increases from seven to ten times when a "load" is at arms length.
- **Poor planning.** Failure to test the load, clear the travel path, and minimize the distance of the lift often leads to additional stress on the back.
- **Poor communication.** Failure to coordinate the move when two people are lifting can result in unnecessary injury. Avoid startling the person you are assisting or moving them without explaining what you are going to do. Ask them to help with the move, if they are able.
- **Insufficient strength.** Never try to lift someone that weighs more than you can safely lift by yourself.



Turning

A sheet or blanket folded lengthwise can be used to help move or turn a person. When used for this purpose, it is often referred to as a draw sheet. A draw sheet helps decrease the strain on people trying to move a large or heavy individual. It is also helpful for moving people with serious physical disabilities because it can reduce the risk of unnecessarily pulling, pushing, or bending sensitive body parts. Sliding the person can promote skin breakdown as the skin is rubbed on the bed sheets. The draw sheet may be used for:

- sliding the person to the edge of the bed in preparation for turning,
- sliding the person toward or away from the head of the bed, or
- turning the person.

- A draw sheet is placed across the bed so when the person lies on it, their shoulders and hips are on the draw sheet.
- It may be adjusted to support the head as well. The sheet should extend over each side of the bed. (*These ends should be tucked under the mattress when not in use.*)

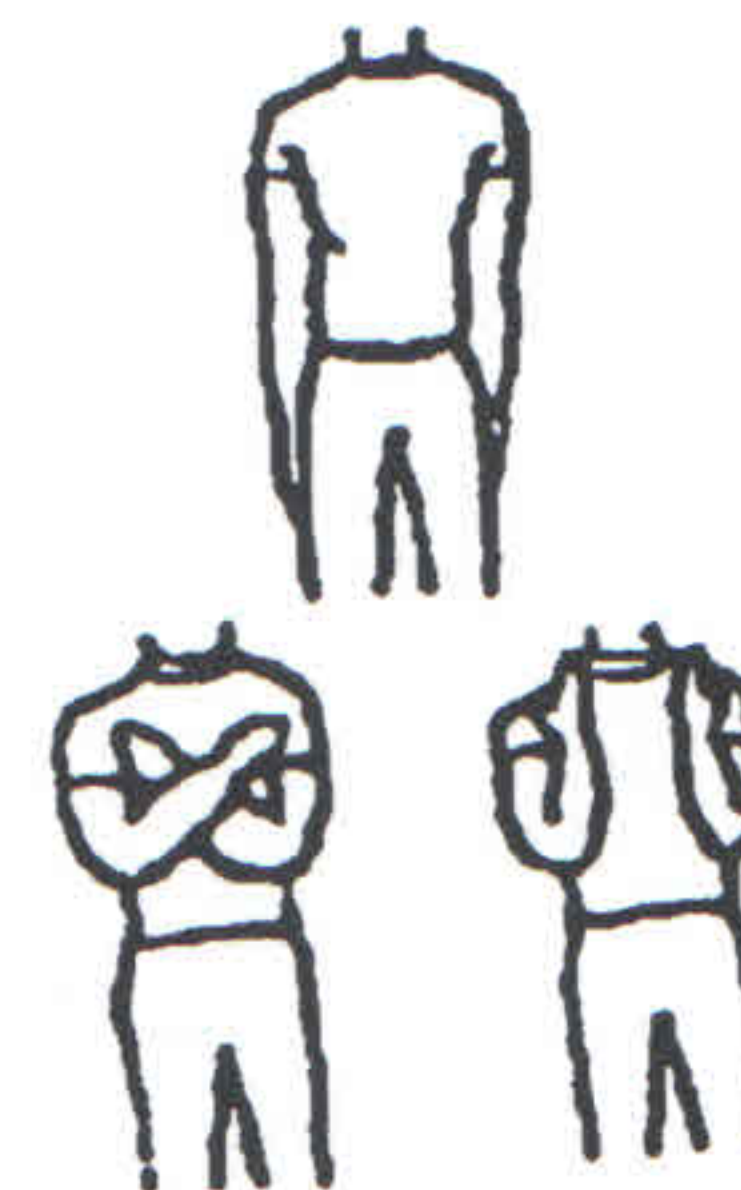


- If the person lacks head control, be sure the head is supported throughout the turn. You may find it helpful to leave the pillow in place throughout the turning process.
- Be sure the nose and mouth are unobstructed throughout the turn.
- When the person has a high level of muscle tone, it may be beneficial to support the upper body with the head positioned forward and the neck slightly flexed as this posture tends to reduce muscle tone.



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- Place the person's arms close to his or her body.
- Place the arms straight and as close to the side of the body as possible. This arm position is appropriate for all turns. There are other arm positions which will also work. For example, you might cross the arms over the chest, bend arms toward shoulders, etc. Some arm positions are more comfortable than others, depending on the person and the intended position.
- You may need to adjust the arm position based on the person's physical condition. Be sure the person does not have to place too much weight on his or her arms. Keep the person's legs together.

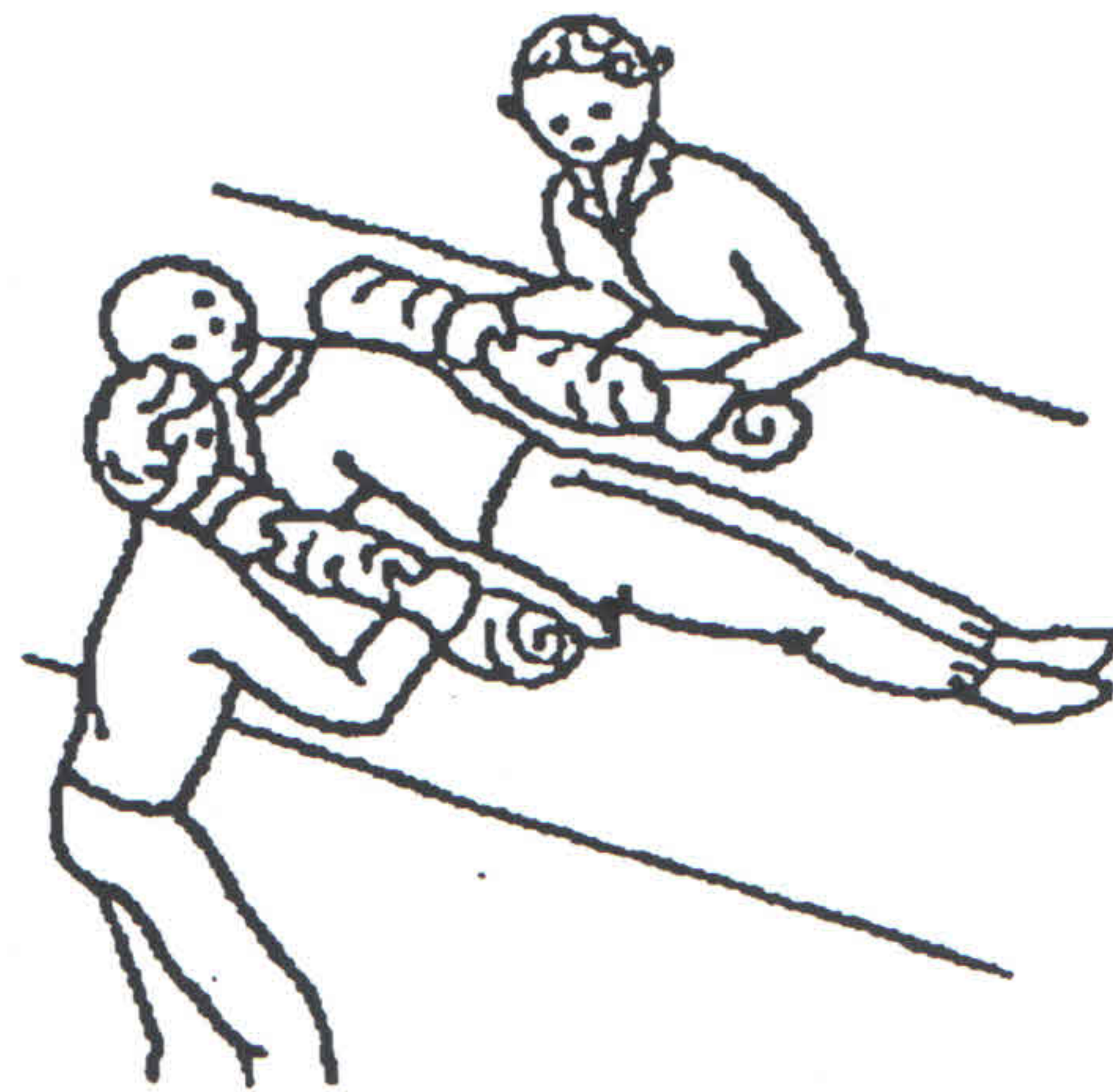


- When the person is in the desired position in the bed, turn the person with your hands or use the sheet to turn.
- Place your hands on the shoulders and hips when performing the turn. Roll the person as you would a log, keeping the hips and shoulders in a straight line.
- Keep the arms close to the body, and keep the legs close together. Maintain physical contact with the person throughout the turn.
- If necessary, use your hand to stabilize the person until you can properly place stabilization devices.



Moving a Person Up In Bed

- After explaining what you're going to do, roll the draw sheet into a tight roll a few inches from the edge of the person's body.
- Roll the sheet under for more stability when lifting.
- Grasp the draw sheet at the shoulders and the hips. Position your feet shoulder width apart.
- On the count of three, both caregivers lift and move the person on the draw sheet in the desired direction while shifting their weight from one foot to the other.
- Shifting or rocking from one foot to the other allows the muscles in the legs to do the work rather than the arms and shoulders. This shifting motion also helps avoid twisting the back while lifting.



Bed Making

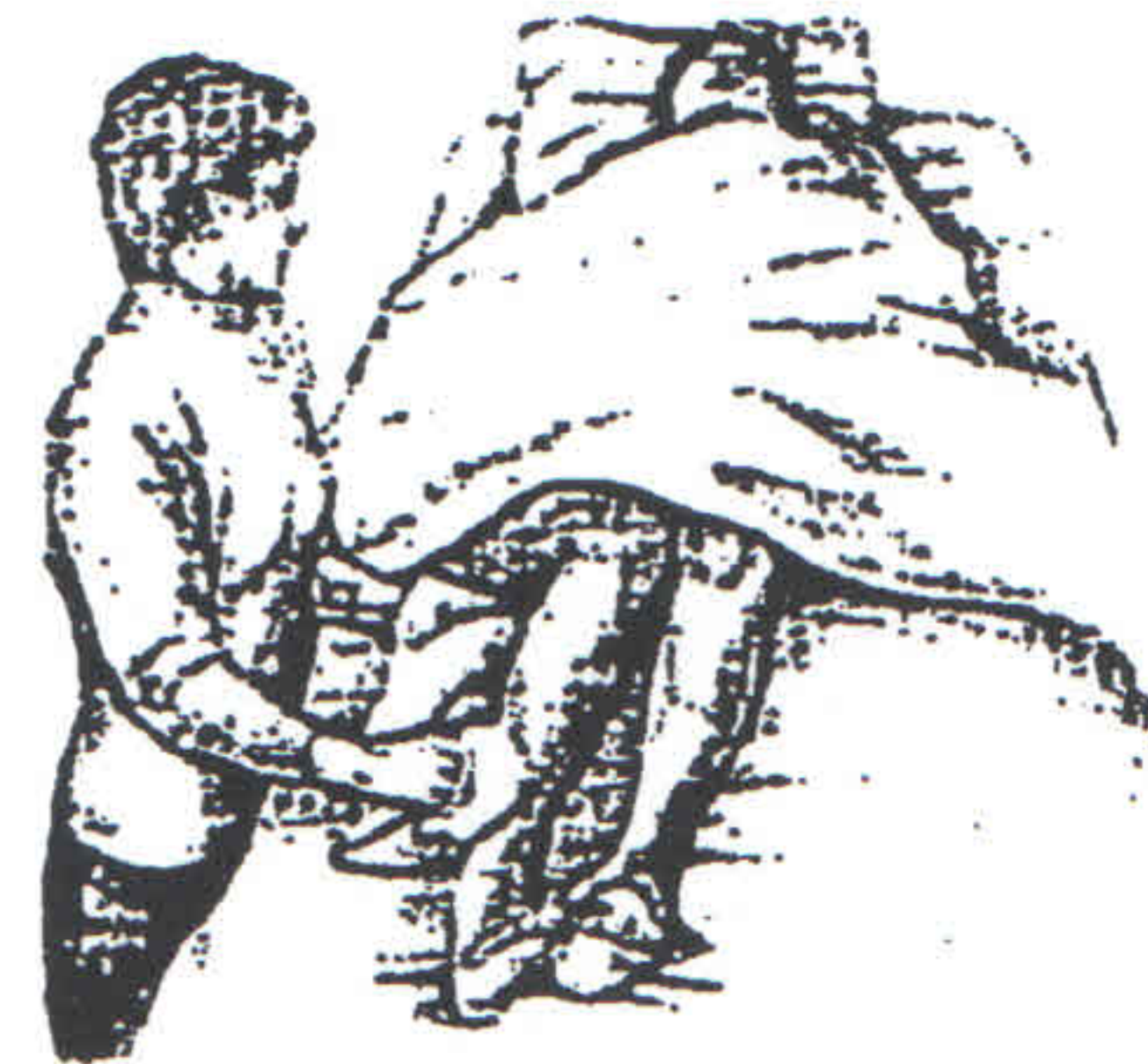
- Slowly and carefully roll the person onto their side.
- Roll half of the soiled sheet lengthwise against the person's back. Roll half of the clean sheet lengthwise and put it on the bed with the rolled half of the sheet down the center of the bed and the other half on the empty side of the bed.
- Roll the person onto the flat, clean half and take off the soiled sheet. Unroll the rest of the clean sheet, stretch it tight, and tuck it in.



Bathing in Bed

*Unless a person is extremely ill, he or she can usually give themselves at least a sponge bath and should be encouraged to participate in the activity.

- Make sure the room is warm before undressing the person.
- Cover them with a large towel and place another towel underneath to protect the bedding. If the person is immobile, place the bottom towel in to position as you would to change a bottom sheet (*refer to bed making section*).
- Position the person in sidelying to bathe perineal area (*refer to turning section*).



Using a Bedpan

- Before giving the person the bedpan, sprinkle a small amount of body powder on the rim to make it easier to slip under their buttocks.
- Instruct the person to lift their hips while the caregiver places the bedpan beneath the person's buttocks, with the open end toward the person's feet.
- If the person cannot lift their hips, turn them on to their side (*refer to turning section*), gently press the bedpan against their buttocks, press the bedpan firmly down into the mattress, and roll the person back on top of it. When finished, hold the bedpan firmly in place and roll them off of it, away from you.

One-Person Transfer From Bed To Chair

- Before you begin the transfer, explain what you are going to do.
- Position the chair so that one side of the chair is flush against the bed and the front of the chair is within arms reach. If you are using a wheelchair, remove the arm rest nearest the bed and remove or fold the foot rests so they are out of your path of movement.



- Position the person so that they are facing you, in a sidelying position, at the edge of the bed.
- Position yourself close to the edge of the bed with your feet spread approximately shoulder width apart.



- Slide one arm under the person's head and cradle the upper part of the person's body.
- Allow their head to rest in the fold of your arm, and place the palm of your hand flat on their back. Place your other arm over and around the person's knees, and grasp the back of the person's bottom knee.
- You're now ready to lift the person.



***This is a critical movement. The risk of injury and accidents is greatest when lifting, so make sure you're prepared.**

- Are your feet spread shoulder width apart?
- Are your knees bent?
- Is your lower back in its normal arched position?



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- Place your hands behind the knees and gently draw their legs out of the bed so that they dangle down toward the floor.
- Place one of your hands on their hip and the other hand on their shoulder blade.
- Press down on their hip and lean back onto your back leg as you do this.
- This will raise them to a sitting position at the side of the bed.
- If the person has the ability, encourage him/her to participate in the process of coming to a sitting position by assisting them to prop up on their elbow and push up from a sidelying position with their forearm and hand as you help them move into an upright position.



- Straddle the person's knees and keep their upper body close to your own, to maintain a sitting position.
- Whenever the person has the ability, allow them to assist in the transfer process, by placing their hands on the bed and requesting that they help stabilize themselves.
- Do not release your hand on the person, even though they are assisting you.
- With one hand, position the person's feet so that they are flat on the floor and ready to bear weight as the person comes to a standing position.



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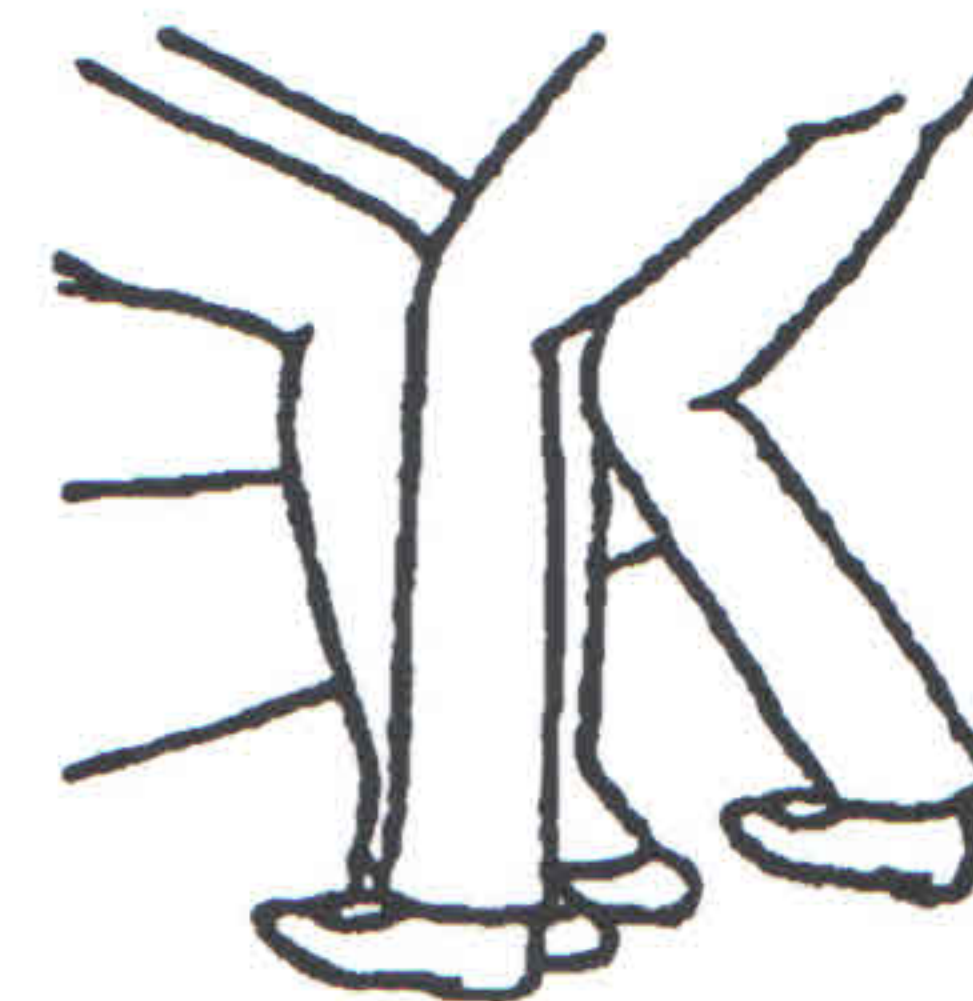
- With one hand, pull the chair close to your knee. If it's a wheelchair, lock both wheels.
- Encourage the person to assume as much of the lifting and weight bearing as they can comfortably handle.
- If using a transfer belt, place the belt snugly around the individual's waist. Check to be certain that it is securely fastened.



- Keeping the person's upper body close to yours, slide your arms under their arms, grasping them under the hip/buttock area; or grasping the center of the transfer belt.
- Request that the person lean forward and push up from the bed or have them hold onto your upper arms. Do not allow individuals to hold onto you by placing their arms around your neck as this will put you at risk of a back or neck injury.
- Bend your knees and hips so that your shoulders are no higher than the person's shoulders. Gently pull your arms toward you to obtain firm contact between the person's upper body and your own.



- Your feet should be shoulder width apart with one foot back.
- Bend your knee to maintain contact with the person's leg.
- Place your weight on the other foot.
- Request that the person lean forward so that his/her head and knees are positioned directly above their feet.
- Ask the person to assist you, when directed, by pushing up with their legs. Say "stand" and shift your weight from the forward to backward foot while pulling the person forward and upward with hands on hip or buttock area (or with your hands on their back under their shoulder blades), or grasp the transfer belt on both sides of the person's waist.



- Pivot toward the chair, and ask the person to reach back for the arm of the chair with one hand and to get ready to sit down in the chair.
- Gently lower the person into the chair, bending your knees and not your waist. Properly position the person in the sitting position.



Sliding Board Transfer

A sliding board transfer, in which a board is used to slide a person to and from a wheelchair, can be an efficient tool for moving larger individuals or those who have significant difficulty in assisting with a transfer. This method promotes the person's sense of independence and is significantly less physical stress on the person lifting.



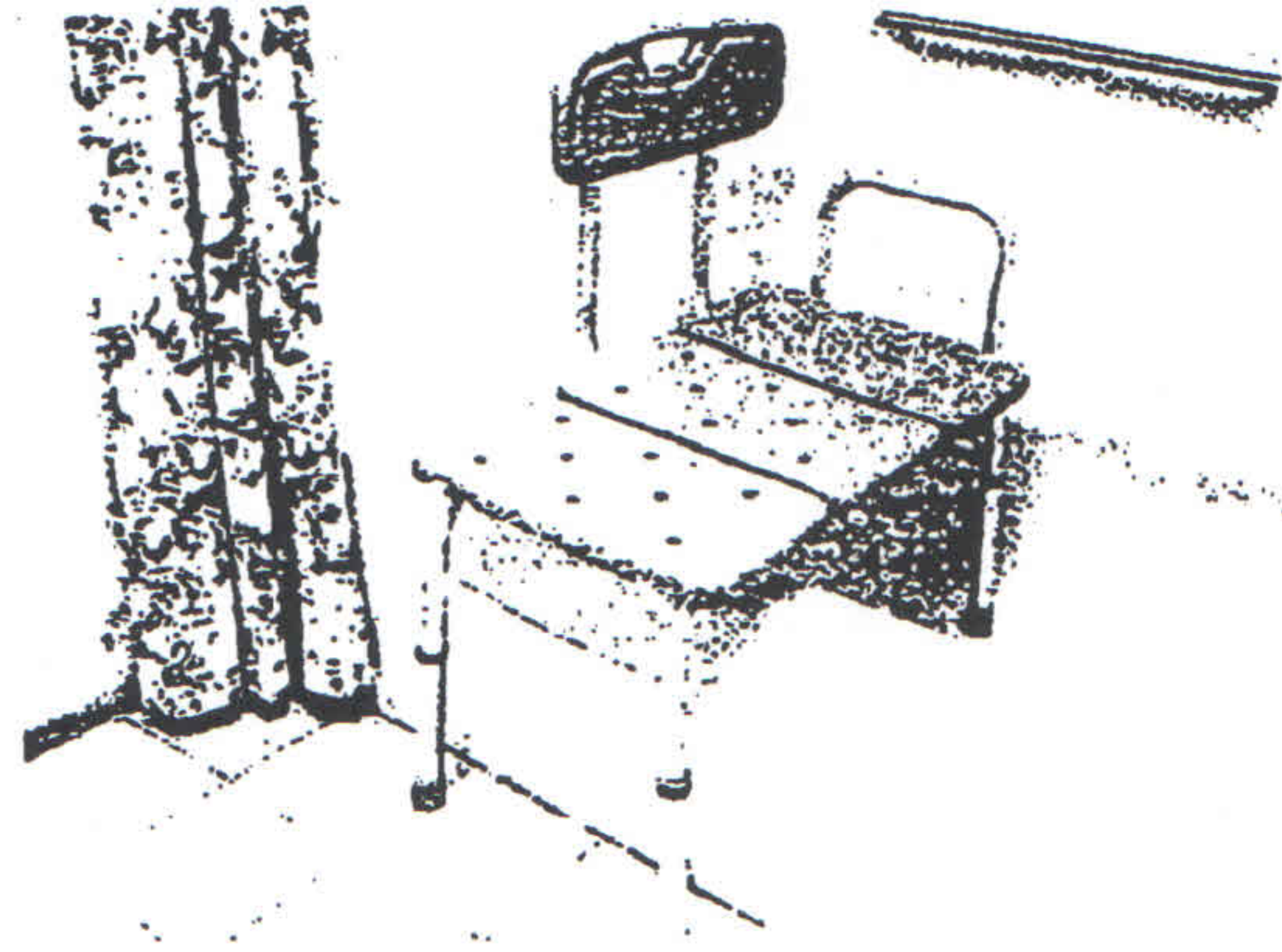
- Remove the armrest from the chair on the side the person will be transferring
- Instruct the person to lean to the side opposite of the direction they are transferring, this helps take weight off the hip and aids in the transfer.
- Place the board underneath the hip on the bottom of the buttocks
- Have the person lean their shoulders forward and in the opposite direction they are transferring.
- Instruct the person to help you "scoot" them out, across the board to the bed.
- It is helpful to place a sheet or pillow case over the sliding board to help reduce friction.

Transfers in the Bathroom

*If the person is able to move and is strong enough, they should be encouraged to bathe in the tub or shower. If getting in and out of the tub or standing for long periods of time is difficult, put a chair on a non-slip mat in the tub or shower. Having the person sit in front of the sink on a chair is also a good idea. The occupational therapist can suggest some ideas for equipment, such as grab bars and bath stools, which make using the bathroom safer.

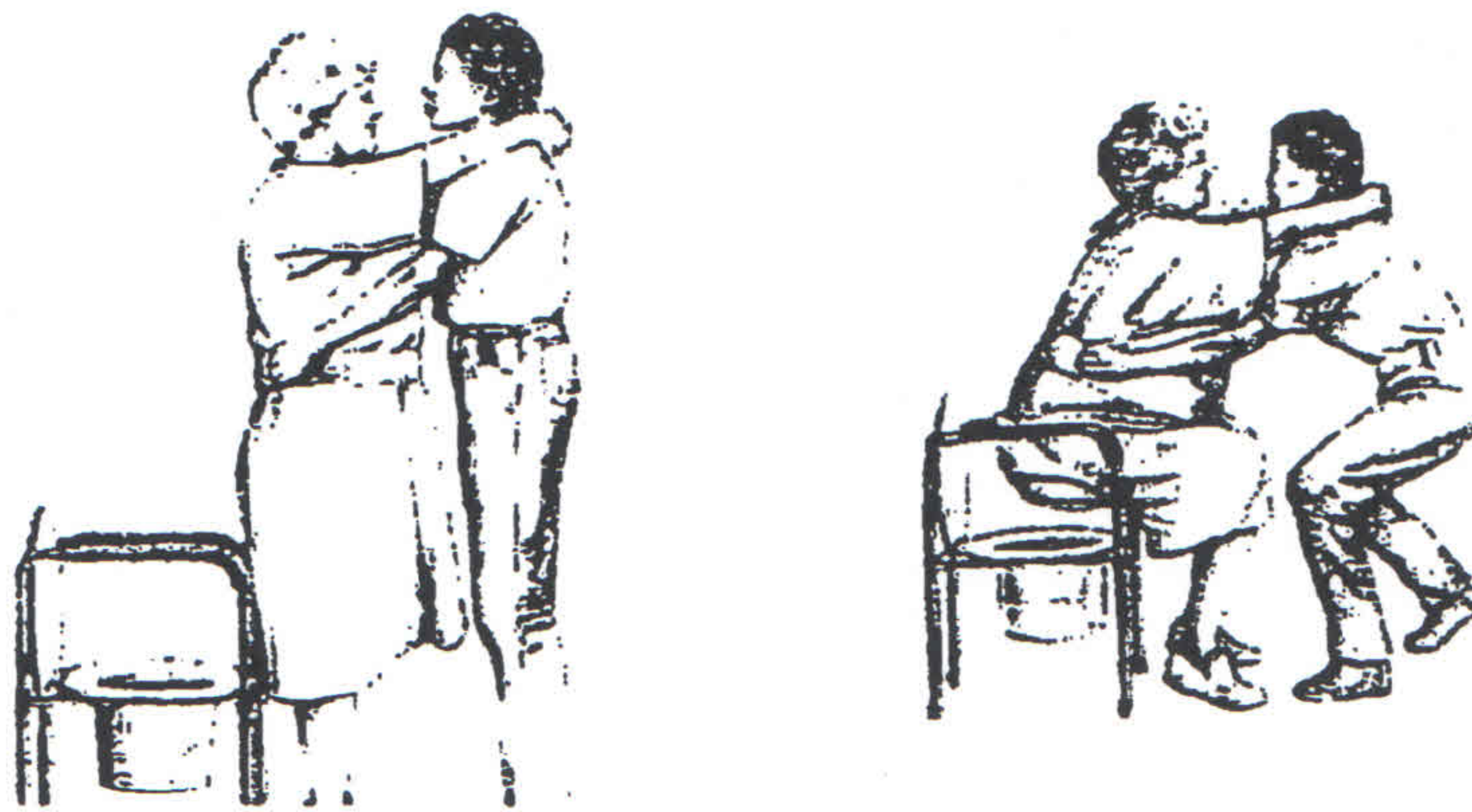
Shower/Tub Transfer

- When transferring a person to a shower chair in a tub, begin with the person in a seated position in a chair parallel to the tub.
- From this point a regular sitting or standing transfer is performed (*refer to one person transfer from bed to chair section*).
- Lift the person's legs into the tub and assist them to slide over to the center of the tub.



Toilet Transfer

- The procedure for transferring from the chair to the toilet will vary depending on the space available in the bathroom and the person's ability to assist with the transfer.
- Always position the chair as close to the toilet as possible. The person's clothing is raised and lowered while in the chair rather than on the toilet.



*It works best if both the chair and the toilet seat are the same height. The sitting transfer is then applied to move the person from the chair to the toilet and then back to the chair again (*refer to one person transfer from bed to chair section*).

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