

Lesson one: Introduction

What are transfer boards?

Transfer boards help a person to move from one surface to another while sitting down. Transfer boards make the environment easier to transfer between by connecting the two surfaces.

Transfer boards are sometimes called sliding boards. However, it is important that a person lifts when moving from one surface to another. Sliding can damage a person's skin.

To be safe and effective, all transfer boards should have important features. Other features are useful for people with specific needs and transfer environments.

Important features	Other features
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Be strong and durable with rounded edges ✓ Be specified to carry the weight of the user ✓ Have a smooth top surface ✓ Have a non-slip base. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Handles • Lightweight • Shape and length • Sloping ends.

Who uses transfer boards?

A person may benefit from the support of a transfer board if they:


- Have difficulty standing or are not able to stand
- Are worried about falling, or have fallen more than once in the past year
- Experience pain while transferring.

Lesson two: Select

The first step in providing a transfer board is to assess the person's needs to select the best product with them. The assessment will gather information about the person's health, ability, and where they will use the transfer board. This will ensure the person can use a transfer board safely.

Always involve a family member or caregiver where appropriate.

Pressure wound

If a person has a pressure wound on their hips, buttocks or back, they are at risk of making it worse while using a transfer board. A pressure wound is a serious health risk. If the person has a pressure wound,  refer the person to a health care professional.

Ability to transfer

Ask the person different questions about their ability to transfer.

Ask:

- Do you have difficulty standing or are you not able to stand?
- Do you have pain when transferring?
- Do you worry about falling or have you fallen more than once in the past year?


If the answer to any is yes, a transfer board may assist the person to transfer.

Ability when sitting

Asking questions about a person's ability to transfer when sitting will help decide whether to teach the person to transfer with or without assistance.

If the answer to **any** of the following questions is no, the person should be taught to transfer with assistance:

- Can you sit without support and not worry about falling?
- Can you lean to the side with one hand for support and use the other hand to position the transfer board?
- Can you lean forward comfortably?
- Can you push through your hands to shift weight off your buttocks?
- Can you easily remember and follow instructions?

If a family member or caregiver is not available, with the person's permission,  refer them to a rehabilitation service.

Environment

A person may need to transfer to and from different environments. Teach the person and/or caregiver how to use the transfer board in the environment they will be using it in.

- Check the distance between the transfer surfaces
 - If space is limited a shaped or shorter transfer board may help
 - If the distance between surfaces is further apart, a longer transfer board may help.
- Check if there is a height difference between the transfer surfaces:
 - Together with the person, discuss if it is possible to make the transfer surfaces the same height
 - If the person is having difficulty and the height of transfer surfaces cannot easily be adjusted, consider whether other assistive products, such as grab bars, can help.

Additional information

- If a person uses a wheelchair, toilet chair or shower chair, check design:
 - Removable armrests and brake levers that sit below the top of the seat make it easier to position the transfer board
 - Removable footrests allow the transfer surfaces to be positioned closer together.

Plan

After the assessment interview, make a plan with the person and decide together:

- If the person needs a transfer board and the type of transfer board that would be most suitable
- What training is needed to use the transfer board safely
- If they may benefit from a referral to other services
- When to book a follow up appointment.

Lesson three: Fit

The second step in providing a transfer board is to fit the product for the person's environment. Before using the transfer board check:

- The product:
 - Weight limit is suitable for the person
 - Surface is safe to use
 - Shape matches the plan on the assessment form

- The environment:
 - Transfer surfaces are clear of obstacles
 - Height of surfaces are the same or similar
 - Transfer board fits on both surfaces.
- If assistance is needed:
 - There is enough space for the assistant to move around
 - The area is clear of obstacles
 - The floor is not slippery
 - There is good lighting.

Lesson four: Use

The third step in providing a transfer board is to teach the person how to use and take care of the product. Using a transfer board correctly is safer and helps the product to last longer.

Transferring

To transfer safely using a transfer board:

- Always put the brakes on the wheelchair
- Lift buttocks, to avoid bumping or dragging your skin
- Wear clothes that cover the bottom part of the body to help protect skin.

Encourage the person to use whatever physical ability they have during the transfer.

How to transfer

Step	Action
1. Set up	Bring the front edge of the wheelchair seat as close to the other surface as possible by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positioning the wheelchair at an angle • Removing or moving the footrest.
2. Prepare to transfer	Move to the front surface where you are seated, place feet flat on the floor and position the transfer board under one buttock by leaning to the side.
3. Transfer	Lean forward to shift weight off buttocks, then push down through arms and/or legs and do small lifts. Once safely seated on new surface remove the transfer board by leaning to the side. With assistance: Stand close behind the person and support around their hips to assist the lift. Coordinate the lift together by counting “1,2,3, lift.”

How to look after a transfer board

To clean and look after a transfer board:

- Regularly check for cracks or other damage
- If it gets soiled, wipe clean with soap and water using a damp cloth and always dry it completely
- Store it within easy reach when needed.


Lesson five: Follow up

The fourth step in providing a transfer board is to make sure that the product still meets the person’s needs and is in good condition.

- Follow up should be done for all people who are using the transfer board long term.

- If a person is only using the transfer board short term, a follow up should still be considered if they have any difficulties using the transfer board.

It is important that people know that they can contact the service at any time if they have a problem with their transfer board. Usually, a person who uses a transfer board has other assistive products. If you are doing a follow up visit for another assistive product, also check their transfer board.

If the person has any difficulties, follow up is recommended within one week. If the person continues to have difficulties, with their agreement  refer for rehabilitation.