

Section 18

Back Care and Equipment

Back pain is common among carers. For your safety' and the safety of the person you care for' you should not be attempting to lift anyone or take their body weight. Even helping someone to dress or to move from the bed to a chair can result in back strain for you and possible injure the person you care for.

Ask your GP to refer you to the District Nurse or Physiotherapist who will be able to assess what tasks you are doing and what is the safest way to do them.

Here are a few tips for you to remember when you move anything (including the person you care for).

Always:

- ask yourself, do they need to be moved? Avoid unnecessary transfers;
- allow and encourage the person you care for to help you as much as possible;
- tell them what you plan to do;
- allow plenty of time for the task in hand;
- wear sensible shoes and comfortable clothes;
- make sure the space around you is clear;
- stand as close as possible;
- do not twist or bend to assist them;
- go round slowly using tiny steps;
- sit/kneel down to perform tasks which involve bending e.g. feeding, talking, listening;
- **Keep your back straight.**

What should I do if the person I care for has a fall?

Do not attempt to lift someone if they have fallen or slipped over – contact **999** and ask for the Ambulance Service.

If you try to lift someone after a fall you could do one or both of the following:

- injure yourself or the person you care for
- make worse an injury they may have got during the fall

Make the person as comfortable as you can without moving them and remove any hazards that may be around.

The paramedics will assess any injury the person you care for may have and advise you about what they think should happen next.

I have back pain—what should I do?

Don't ignore it!

Your GP may prescribe anti-inflammatory drugs to calm strained muscles. There is no need to be immobile, very gentle stretching exercises will help your muscles to relax. **Seek advice** before purchasing lifting or turning aids to help you, in case it is not suitable or is available from Social Services, please read about Occupational Therapy Services on the next page.

Where can I go for advice or equipment?

Occupational Therapy Services

Occupational Therapy Services are provided by Community Care Services. They can advise you on what is the most appropriate equipment for your needs and the needs of the person you care for.

They aim to help people keep as safe and as independent as possible in their own homes. By talking to people about what they are able to do and what they find difficult, they can then advise on the different ways their needs can be met. This is called an **assessment** and may lead to the offer of services.

Unfortunately, we cannot help those with a short-term disability or medical problem. If you are in this situation, please contact your own family doctor for help.

You may also find our booklet, Guide to Daily Living Services and Information for Older and Disabled People helpful at www.kingston.gov.uk/our_publications.htm

The guide includes useful information on mail order companies, wheelchair suppliers, the Kingston Shopmobility Scheme, and other national associations and organisations offering help.

You can contact the Occupational Therapist for advice, or to make a referral for equipment for the person you care for, by contacting the **Initial Response Team** (IRT) on **020 8547 6621**

Where can I buy equipment from?

There are many places you can visit to get ideas and buy pieces of equipment including:

Daily Living Equipment Shops

Community Care Services run two non-profit making shops. You can try out the equipment and staff will order any equipment you need if it is not in stock.

Newent Resource Centre
8-10 Browns Road
Surbiton

020 8399 0032

Tuesday 10-12 noon

Crescent Resource Centre
Cocks Crescent
New Malden

020 8547 6511

Wednesday 10 am-12 noon

Keep Able

01784 440044

www.keepable.co.uk

Keep Able, 11-17 Kingston Road, Staines, Middlesex, is a large store where you can try pieces of equipment and get advice. If you are not able to visit, you can contact them and ask for a catalogue to be sent to you to order over the phone or internet.

Open Mon to Fri 9am—5pm and Saturday 10am—4pm

Careful Mobility

020 8549 8855

www.carefulmobility.com

Based in Canbury Park Road, Kingston, this small outlet is able to advise you about equipment and will arrange a home visit for you to try out equipment if necessary. They have a catalogue that can be sent to you.

Boots the Chemist

www.boots.com

Boots have a catalogue you can order from or visit the store and speak to staff at the Pharmacy counter.

Kingston **8541 1644**

Surbiton **8399 2715**

Tolworth

8399 9836

New Malden **8942 0935**