

❖ How to Facilitate Standing Safely

Starting Position

In order for the patient to feel safe and secure once standing, it is best to create a safe environment. Standing in the middle of an open room can be very frightening to patients. Instead, have the patient positioned with the chair/wheelchair behind them, a stable support or surface (such as a solid table, kitchen counter, or bathroom sink) in front of them, and the therapist standing on the weak side.

Handling

1. Stand next to the patient on their weak side and a half step behind.
2. Firmly place your hands on the patient's hips.
3. Make contact with the front of your hip against the back of their weak side.
4. Do not pull the patient toward you as this can throw them off balance. Instead, move your hip forward from your own stable base of support. It's okay if you are shorter or taller than your patient—it's the contact that's important.
5. Widen your base of support for tall, large patients.



Tips

Monitor the patient closely and watch for signs of fatigue (changes in breathing, perspiration, or color). If the patient becomes fatigued or needs to sit down, their chair placed behind them makes it very easy to do so.

Variations

- If you are tall and your patient is short, it may be easier for you to be in a sitting position with your legs on each side of the patient's knees while standing your patient. This will lower your center of gravity and make it more comfortable for you.
- If your facility requires you to use a gait belt, make sure you do. However, gait belts do not teach patients normal patterns of movement. All facilitation methods are shown without a gait belt.

Common Mistakes

- Many therapists are fearful when their patients stand and consequently pull them slightly backwards. This common mistake is easy to identify. Look at the patient's toes in standing. If their toes lift up off the floor, your patient has their weight too far back and will need to come slightly forward.
- Make sure your hands are firmly on the patient's hips, not at the waist. You will have little control if your hands are on their waist.

⌘21 Pause and Practice with a Partner

- When you are the “patient,” don't push, just lean against your “therapist”. Notice how safe you feel.
- Try the same method without contact at the hip. Experience the difference in how secure it feels.