

Laterally Repositioning a Client Safe Work Procedure

Issue Date: May 1, 2026

Last Review Date: _____

Reviewed By: _____

Risk Factors:

- When laterally repositioning a client from one surface to another, equipment to minimize friction is needed to facilitate safe repositioning. Removable slider sheets (e.g. maxi slide sheets) or an air assisted device, such as the AirPal, can assist and reduce risk of worker injury.
- To prevent over-reaching, attach transfer belts as extensions on the repositioning equipment or workers can position themselves on the surface to get closer to the load.
- Use a pat slide to bridge the gap between surfaces and ensure the brakes are applied on both surfaces prior to moving the client.

Client Considerations:

- Consider the client's abilities, weight and size when determining appropriate repositioning equipment to use for lateral repositioning and the number of workers needed to assist.

Number of Workers: Minimum 2 workers

Equipment Needed: Pat slide to bridge surfaces and repositioning equipment (e.g. air pal or maxi slide sheets and transfer belts)

Procedure:

1. Prepare surfaces

- Position the surface the client will be repositioned to alongside the surface they are currently positioned on. Position the side rails down on both surfaces where they meet.
- Position a pat slide to bridge the gap between the two surfaces.
- The receiving surface should be slightly lower (1-2 inches) than the surface the client is currently positioned on to facilitate moving the client to the receiving surface.
- Ensure that the brakes are applied for both surfaces.

2. Select appropriate repositioning equipment

- The following options can be used to reposition a client laterally from one surface to another
 - Two maxi slide sheets with transfer belts attached to the top sheet
 - An AirPal air-assisted transfer system reduces friction and manual effort by creating a "bed of air" through a perforated mattress. The AirPal's mattress has tiny holes on its underside that eject air to reduce surface friction.

3. Prepare the repositioning equipment

A. Using Maxi Slide Sheets

- Position the maxi slide sheets under the client using the unraveling technique or turn the client to their side to position the sheets under them.
- Attached transfer belts to the black straps of the top maxi slide sheet. This will allow workers to pull the client laterally to the other surface using safe body mechanics and prevent over-reaching.



B. Using an AirPal

- Instruct the client to roll to their side or assist with turning the client.
- Position the AirPal under the client.
- Ensure that the width of the AirPal's supporting surface is wide enough for the client.
- Turn on the AirPal's pump and inflate the supporting surface under the client.
- Secure the client on the AirPal using the safety straps.



4. Complete lateral repositioning

- The client is moved across the surfaces with workers pulling using handles/transfer belts from one side. Additional workers could also assist with pushing the client from the other side, as needed. Workers are to use their clinical judgment as to how many workers are needed to pull/push during the move.
- A minimum of two workers should pull the client with one pulling in line with the top half of the client's body and one pulling in line with the lower half of the client's body. Additional workers may be used to guide the clients head and feet, as needed.
- The move may need to be completed in multiple moves to allow for safe body mechanics to be used.
- Workers use safe body mechanics principles of the powerful posture:
 - **Steady stance:** Wide base of support with feet one in front of the other in a staggered stance.
 - **Neutral Spine:** Ears, shoulders and hips are aligned.
 - **Bend at the Hips and Knees:** Strong leg muscles are engaged. The weight shift through the legs is a backward/downward movement (bend the knees and hips), then a forward/upward movement (straightening the knees and hips) to pull or push the client.
 - **Strong Grip:** Palms up grip is used to pull transfer belts/AirPal straps.
 - **Load Stays Close:** Elbows are kept close to the trunk when pulling or pushing. If workers are pushing the client, they may need to position themselves on the bed or with one knee on the bed to for safe body mechanics to be used.
 - **Keep the Core Strong:** Abdominal muscles are engaged.
 - **Minimize Twisting:** The face and feet are always pointed in the same direction.

5. Leave the client in a safe position

- Assess that the client is fully repositioned to the second surface, then remove the pat slide and repositioning equipment.
- Release the brakes of the surface the client was repositioned to and move the surface away from the surface the client repositioned from.
- Put appropriate side rails up on surface the client is positioned on.

Resources:

- [Arjo Slide Sheets – Instructions for Use](#)
- [AirPal Instructions for Use](#)
- Other relevant safe work procedures
 - Positioning Removable Slider Sheets under a Client
 - Removing Removable Slider Sheets from under a Client