

Reduce Bending and Reaching

In every day life, there are many situations in which bending and reaching is necessary to perform an activity. For people with back pain or limited movement, these activities may be difficult. Simple techniques to achieve safe body positions and movements, combined with practical equipment and safe environment control can be used to minimise bending and reaching.

BODY POSITIONING

Correct body positioning is important to carry out activities safely. Maintaining the body in a natural 'S' curve allows better shock absorption and flexibility. Also, try to always have the shoulders in a comfortable neutral position.

Gentle exercises such as stretches in the morning will warm up your muscles and joints to prepare for the actions of the day. Avoid twisting your body by aligning your feet, hips and shoulders.

Bend at your hips and knees rather than your waist when performing activities, such as picking up a toy, that requires bending and reaching towards the floor level.

Squatting or sitting with your foot raised on a chair for nail care or to put shoes on reduces bending. Sitting allows a person to complete activities more safely, especially if the person has balance problems and is at risk of falling.

Stand close to the object to avoid bending forward. Decrease the distance between you and the object as much as possible when reaching up with your arms.

ORGANISE YOUR ENVIRONMENT

By organising your environment, many daily activities can be done in a safer, simpler and easier manner.

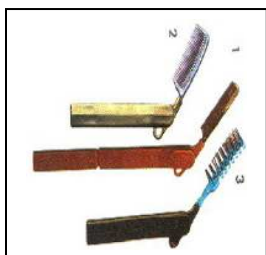
Storing items to minimise unnecessary bending and reaching can be achieved by:

- placing frequently used items between shoulder and hip height.
- placing frequently used heavy items as close to waist height as possible.
- storing less frequently used heavy items between hip and floor level.
- storing less frequently used light items between shoulder and extended arm height.
- using height adjustable equipment such as clotheslines and ironing boards can raise objects and tasks to a safe height.

Other useful strategies include planning activities ahead, such as collecting and arranging equipment before an activity and thinking about how tasks can be carried out more safely.

PERSONAL CARE EQUIPMENT

Shoehorns can assist people to put shoes on without bending.



Long handled sponges and brushes enables people to reach their toes and back more easily.

Long handled/angled combs and brushes can assist people who may have limited arm and shoulder movement or pain to brush or comb their hair.

A dressing stick can assist with pulling up trousers without bending down too much.

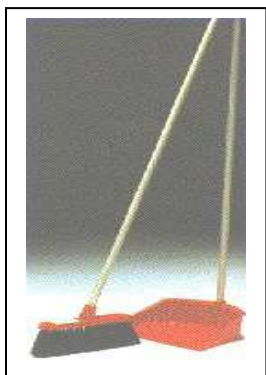


Sock aids may assist with pulling on socks where reaching down to the feet is difficult.

HOUSEHOLD EQUIPMENT

A wide range of equipment is available to assist people to minimise reaching and bending during activities.

Long handled dustpans and brushes allow floor sweeping without the need to bend down.



Long handled reachers may be used to pick lightweight items up from the floor or high places without bending or reaching.

A trolley an appropriate height can be used for moving items around the house.

Raised garden beds limit the amount of bending required.

Long handled gardening tools decrease the amount of bending necessary when gardening.



A bowl lifter allows you to pick up your bowl without bending. A bowling arm enables you to pick up, carry and deliver a bowl or jack without bending.

NEED TO KNOW MORE?

Telephone, fax or e-mail your enquiry to obtain further information from one of the therapists about products. Alternatively, you can make an appointment to trial the equipment at our display centres or through our outreach service. Please phone LifeTec Queensland for further details.

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