3.1: Introduction

In health care, all patient-handling activities, such as positioning, transfers, and ambulation, are considered high risk for injury to patients and health care providers. This chapter reviews the essential guidelines for proper body mechanics and safe transfer techniques to minimize and eliminate injury in health care.

Learning Objectives

• Describe body mechanics and principles of body mechanics
• Define musculoskeletal injury (MSI), factors that contribute to an MSI, and ways to prevent an MSI
• Describe how to complete a mobility assessment prior to positioning, transferring, or ambulating a patient
• Describe various techniques for positioning a patient in bed and types of positions
• Describe how to transfer a patient using assistive devices
• Describe how to transfer a patient from a stretcher to a bed and from a wheelchair to a bed
• Discuss how to prevent accidental falls in the acute and community setting