

Assist to Sit

How Do We Safely Help Someone Transition from Moving to Sitting?

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Take a look at this video clip: [Click here](#)

All transitions in movement are challenging when the brain is failing. Sustaining a rhythm is easier than changing that rhythm, going from being seated to standing, from standing to walking, from walking to stopping, from standing to sitting. Which of these do you think is more complicated and difficult for a person with dementia? Without any additional deficits such as arthritis, stroke, or Parkinsons, it turns out, of all the actions we ask of people in the more advanced states of brain change to do, moving from an upright, standing posture to a seated position is one of the most challenging for many.

Let's think it through. In this transition, we are asking the person to move the weight from the soles of their feet to their buttocks in a chair behind them, without being able to see where they are going.

It is actually a very complex and highly sequenced maneuver. To do it without having to actively think it through, requires what is known as a *procedural or motor memory* for the task. Because it has to be done without actually looking toward the place you want to end up, it is even more difficult to do than getting up.

If you lose the ability to initiate the sequence, then having someone assist you with awareness, knowledge, and skill is essential to your sense of safety and well-being. Keeping the physical movement skills actively in use for as long as possible, is fostered by skillful assistance in transitioning from standing to sitting.

Knowing how to help is critical, being able to support that movement with your movement is equally important, but being comfortable with your cueing abilities and noticing the need for pauses or restarts is the most important ability of all. Try practicing with someone who can provide you with feedback to improve your skills!