



# HANDY HINTS TO AVOID LIFTING AND STRAINING

## Things to help you avoid lifting

- Ask your family and friends for help. Explain that this is only for a short time until you are allowed to lift again.
- Set up routines with support people. Clearly state what help you need and when e.g. help vacuuming the house every Tuesday morning, someone to come around to bath the children at 6pm each night, etc
- Consider hiring help for housework and to look after your children to lessen your physical effort.

## Around the home

- Make sure work and kitchen surfaces are at waist height to avoid bending forward. Use a chopping board to increase the height.
- Store frequently used or heavier objects in easily accessible places – preferably at waist height.
- Use a pick-up stick (available from the chemist) for collecting objects off the floor.
- Do your household jobs in small bursts.
- Use long-handled brushes, mops or vacuum cleaner to avoid straining your back.
- Break down the load you are lifting into smaller, lighter bundles.
- Use a trolley to transport washing rather than lifting a washing basket.
- If you do have to lift a light load, always hold the object close to your body, keep your back straight and bend your knees to lift. Bend your knees not your back.

## Shopping

- Consider setting up an online grocery account to have your shopping delivered.
- Use a lightweight shopping trolley rather than shopping bags to carry goods.
- Break down the load you are lifting into smaller, lighter bundles.
- Plan the amount of walking that you will need to do. Plan to rest as needed.
- Walk slowly and carefully, maintaining good posture.

## Managing a newborn baby

- Leave the baby capsule in the car.
- Lift your baby out and use a sling or pram instead of the capsule.
- Avoid twisting when lifting.

## If you have small children

- Children need plenty of encouragement as they can become frustrated that you are no longer able to lift them. Turn daily activities into a game where possible. Patience is the key!
- Use a reward system, e.g. use star charts to reinforce positive behaviours and add some fun.
- Limit the number of 'jobs' that you need to do each day. Managing children when you have lifting restrictions is more time consuming so you will need to plan for that.
- Plan activities that need lifting around the times when you have some support from a family member or friend. Ask older children to help if appropriate.
- Use a (walk in) shower if possible to avoid lifting over the bath. Have a shower together so that you don't have to lean forward to wash your child.

- Place a small non-slip stool on both the inside and outside of the bath. Stay close to your child while they climb up and over the side of the bath using the stools.
- Use a stool to allow your child to climb up onto the change table and cot where possible. Stay close for safety.
- Teach your child how to climb in and out of the car seat safely. Allow plenty of time when planning trips to avoid the temptation of lifting them in yourself.
- Buy/loan a lightweight pram for lifting in/out of the car. Ensure the pram is easy to fold/unfold.

### For more information and advice

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## Toileting

- Do not strain when you empty your bladder and bowel.
- The best position to sit on the toilet is:
- Sit leaning forward with your feet flat.
- Use a stool underneath your feet so your knees are higher than your hips
- Legs wide apart with your elbows on your thighs
- Let your tummy bulge out and relax
- Always sit on the toilet seat. Do not hover above it
- Stay relaxed on the toilet; relax your breathing
- Allow yourself time, do not rush.

