

*“..Sometimes I need a break.
I didn’t know how important it
was for me to take care of myself.
Going out every Wednesday and
having a hit of tennis with the
girls, it makes a difference to how
I cope with the rest of the week...”*

HEALTH OF THE CARER





HEALTH OF THE CARER

HEALTH TIPS

Health Tips

- Eat a diet high in fresh fruit and vegetables—this will help you maintain strength and energy throughout the day.
- Drink plenty of water—this will help you remain hydrated throughout the day and can aid digestion.
- Keep active—exercise regularly.
- Time out—take time for yourself.
- Ask for help when you need it.

HEALTH OF THE CARER

Your role as a carer is a very important one. It is a constant role that can be physically and mentally demanding and it is important that carers look after themselves to avoid injury or burnout. Your health and physical fitness is important in assisting you to look after the person you care for and it is important to consider your own needs and take time for yourself.

KEEP FIT—EXERCISE REGULARLY

Exercise regularly—it will be good for you physically and mentally as well as a chance for respite from your caring role.

Physical activity is recommended for at least 30 minutes on most days. You can accumulate this during the day by combining a few shorter sessions of activity throughout the day.

Regular activity can:

- help prevent heart disease, stroke and high blood pressure;
- reduce the risk of developing Type II diabetes and some cancers;
- help build and maintain healthy bones, muscles and joints reducing the risk of injury; and
- promote psychological wellbeing.

If undertaking an exercise program is impractical for you there are a wide range of physical activities you can do during your daily activities that offer great benefits. Think of movement as an opportunity, not an inconvenience.

Four types of exercise are needed to keep you healthy:

- 1. Fitness activities**—keep your heart, lungs and blood vessels healthy.
- 2. Strength activities**—help your muscles and bones stay strong and assist in injury prevention.
- 3. Flexibility activities**—help you to move more easily and assist in injury prevention.
- 4. Balance activities**—improve your balance and help to prevent falls.

Here are some suggested exercise activities:

Walking to the shops

Golf

Walking the dog

Water aerobics

Mopping and vacuuming

Swimming

Dancing

Lifting and carrying (e.g. groceries or small children)

Climbing stairs (instead of taking the lift or escalator)

Moderate yard work (e.g. digging and shifting soil)

Tai Chi

Bowls (indoor and outdoor)

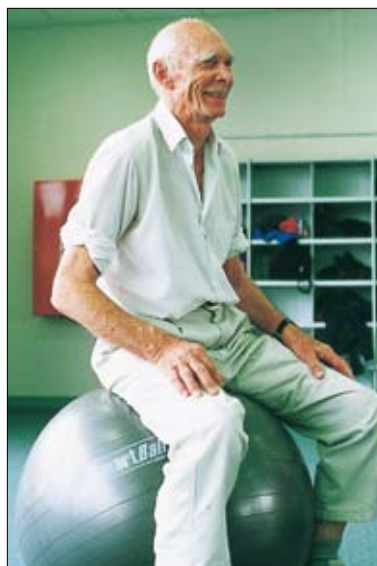
Yoga

Bike riding

STABILITY

As well as making sure you maintain good back posture when transferring, it is important to be aware of how to stabilise your abdomen (trunk) and lower body. Stability is important as it prepares your body for transferring and helps prevent injury.

Stabilising is performed by contracting the 'corset' like muscles that support



your spine and lower back. Prior to undertaking any transferring, contract your pelvic floor muscles and at the same time gently draw your navel towards your spine. This action of drawing your navel towards your spine causes the deep stomach muscles to contract. As these muscles tighten they will act as a 'brace' to support your spine. By performing this action during everyday tasks such as gardening and cleaning the house, you are developing your core stability and reducing your chance of a lower back injury.

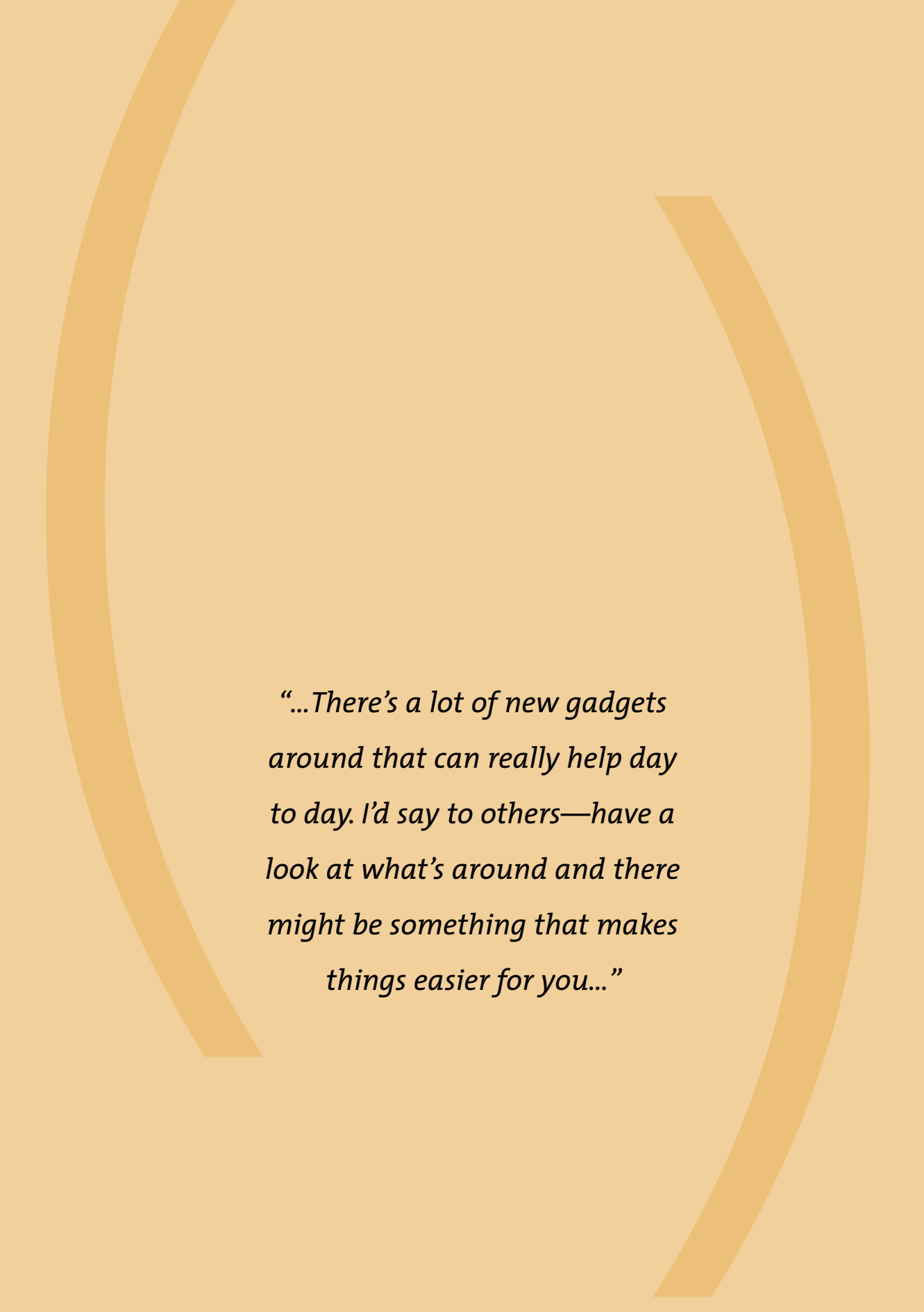
To transfer the person you care for safely, it is important that you use these muscles each time you perform a transferring movement.

If you are unsure of how to stabilise effectively, please contact your health provider.

Maintaining your fitness, balance, strength, flexibility and stability is vital to minimising your risk of injury when helping to transfer a person, and in your general day-to-day activities.

MINIMISE YOUR RISKS

- Explain to the person you are about to transfer what will be done during the intended move so they can assist where possible.
- Where possible use equipment to reduce effort and stress on yourself and the person.
- Always bend your knees and maintain good back posture.
- Do not go into a position that is uncomfortable for you (e.g. a squat).
- Never try to catch a person if they are falling.
- Never attempt to take all of a person's weight when transferring.
- Be aware of your own ability and physical limitations and exercise regularly to remain strong.
- When in doubt—do not attempt the transfer.



“...There’s a lot of new gadgets around that can really help day to day. I’d say to others—have a look at what’s around and there might be something that makes things easier for you...”