

Appendix A: Helpful Hints on Slings

Selection of the appropriate sling accessory for movement / lift /transfer, must include the following considerations:

- Decision to transfer patient in sitting vs. supine position – choose correct functionality of the sling
- Select appropriate size
- Maintain alignment of the affected body part(s) according to pre-operative/post-operative guidelines
 - Consider the patient’s body size, shape and features (e.g. very large abdominal girth can limit degree of hip flexion)
 - Features of sling:
 - consider where material covers the patient
 - strap options for seated slings-the length of material for strap supports of the lower extremities can often be modified by selecting differing loop attachment points of the sling onto the hanger bar (e.g. providing more material length will allow lower extremity to be in less flexed position)
 - seated slings back height can vary from supporting whole trunk and head to covering pelvis/waist only. When upper extremities are involved, consider height of the sling – high back slings will wrap around and enclose an upper extremity, while a low back sling will allow upper extremity to be free
- If alignment/positioning guidelines cannot be met with available sling accessory, transfer patient supine with sheet style sling or anti-friction methods, then sit upright.
- The “Patient Care Sling Selection and Usage Toolkit” is available for download at: <http://www.visn8.med.va.gov/patientsafetycenter/safePtHandling/toolkitSlings.asp>