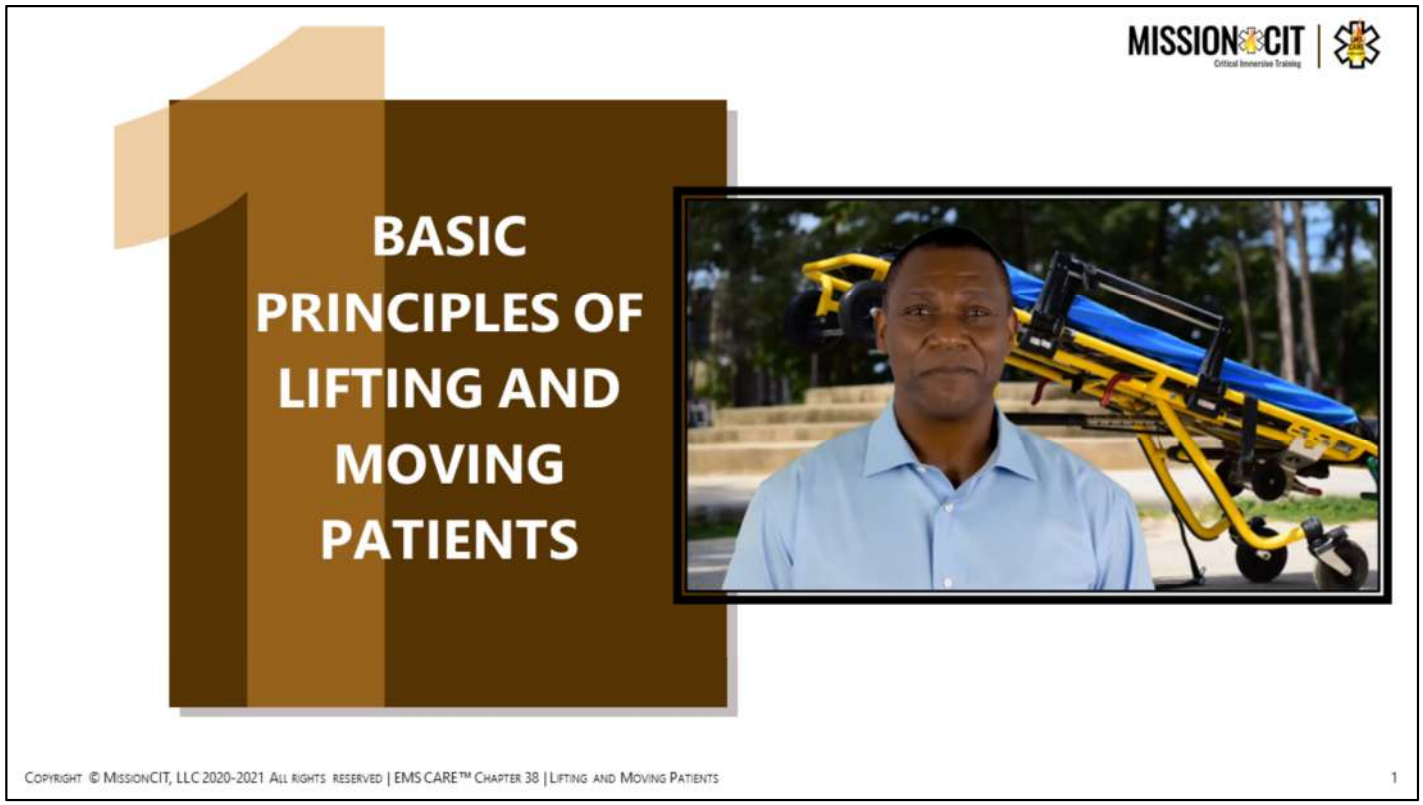
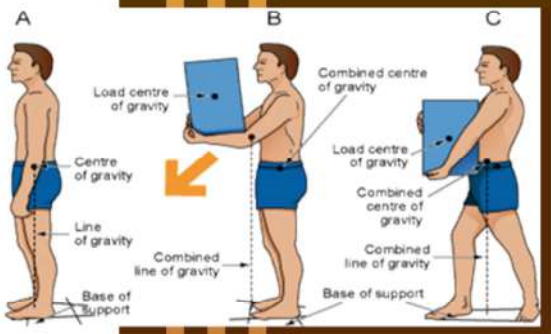


Hello and welcome to the first lesson where we talk about Basic Principles of Lifting and Moving Patients. Specifically, we will talk about protecting yourself and the safe lifting techniques you must use.

Are you ready to dive in?

Protecting Yourself

- Protecting yourself is key
- Consider the following before lifting/moving patients:
  - ✓ Weight of the object
  - ✓ Body limitation
  - ✓ Plan to lift and communication

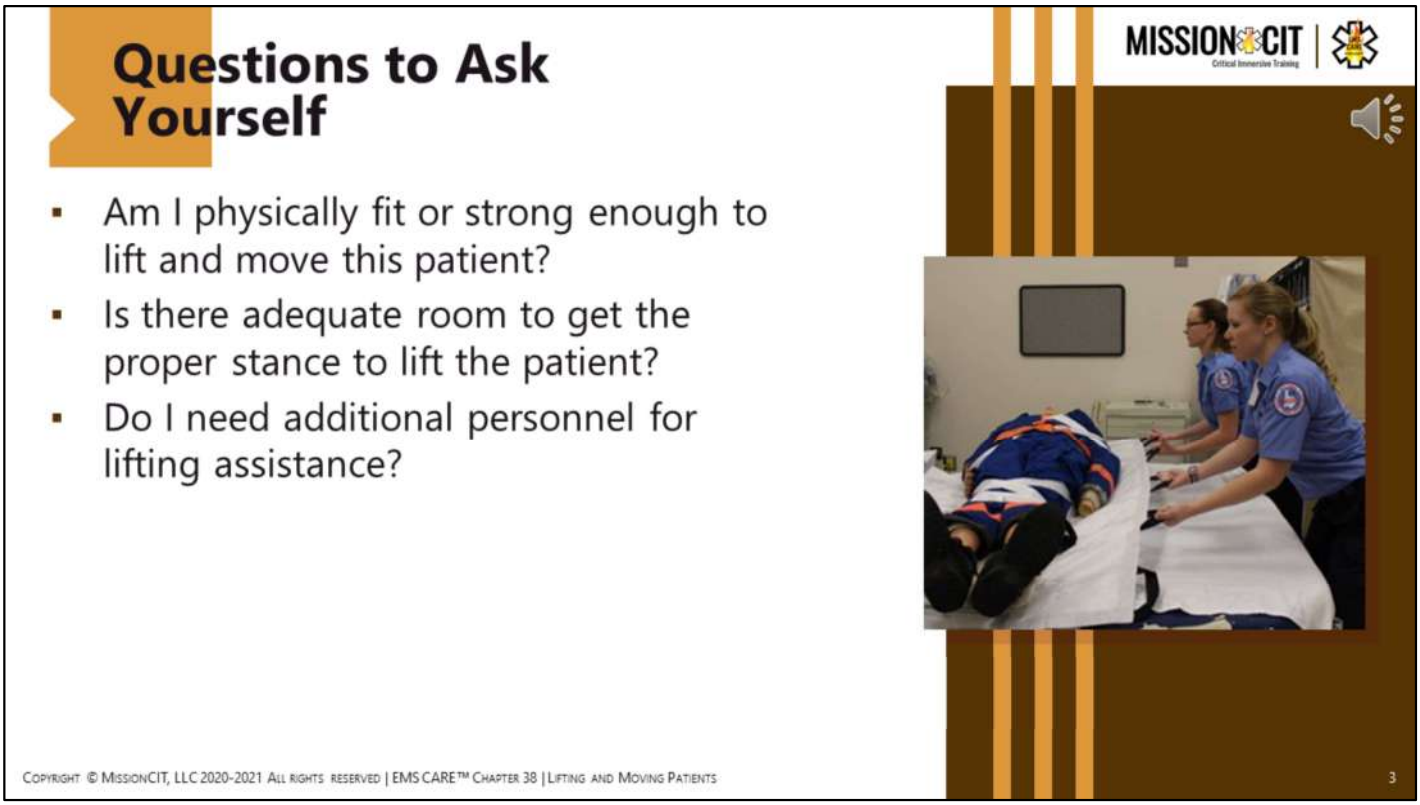


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Let's start with you. How can you protect yourself while lifting and moving patients?

Before you lift a patient, consider the following three aspects.

- The object itself and its weight. Depending on this, you can decide if you'd need additional help with lifting.
- Secondly, your body limitations, and
- Have a plan to lift and communicate the same with your partner.



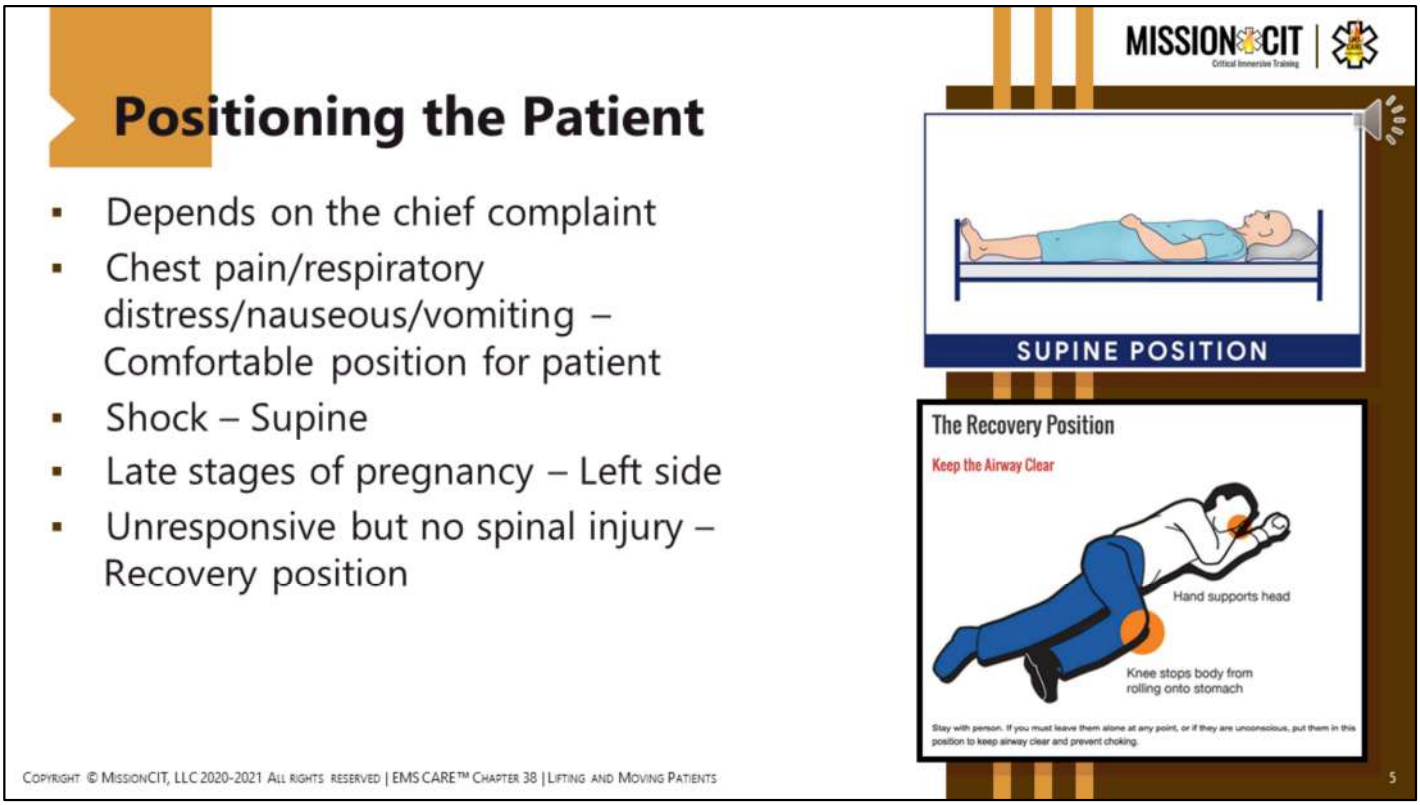
Some of the questions to ask yourself before coming up with a plan are:

- Am I physically fit or strong enough to lift and move this patient?
- Is there adequate room to get the proper stance to lift the patient?
- Do I need additional personnel for lifting assistance?

Giving honest answers can determine the next course of action. Never push yourself and remember, injured EMTs can't help anyone.



This video from the American Nurses Association (ANA) explains how nurses and healthcare workers like us suffer injuries from manually handling patients. Thus, the SPHM program was created to support actions and policies that protect healthcare workers and also promotes a culture of safety.

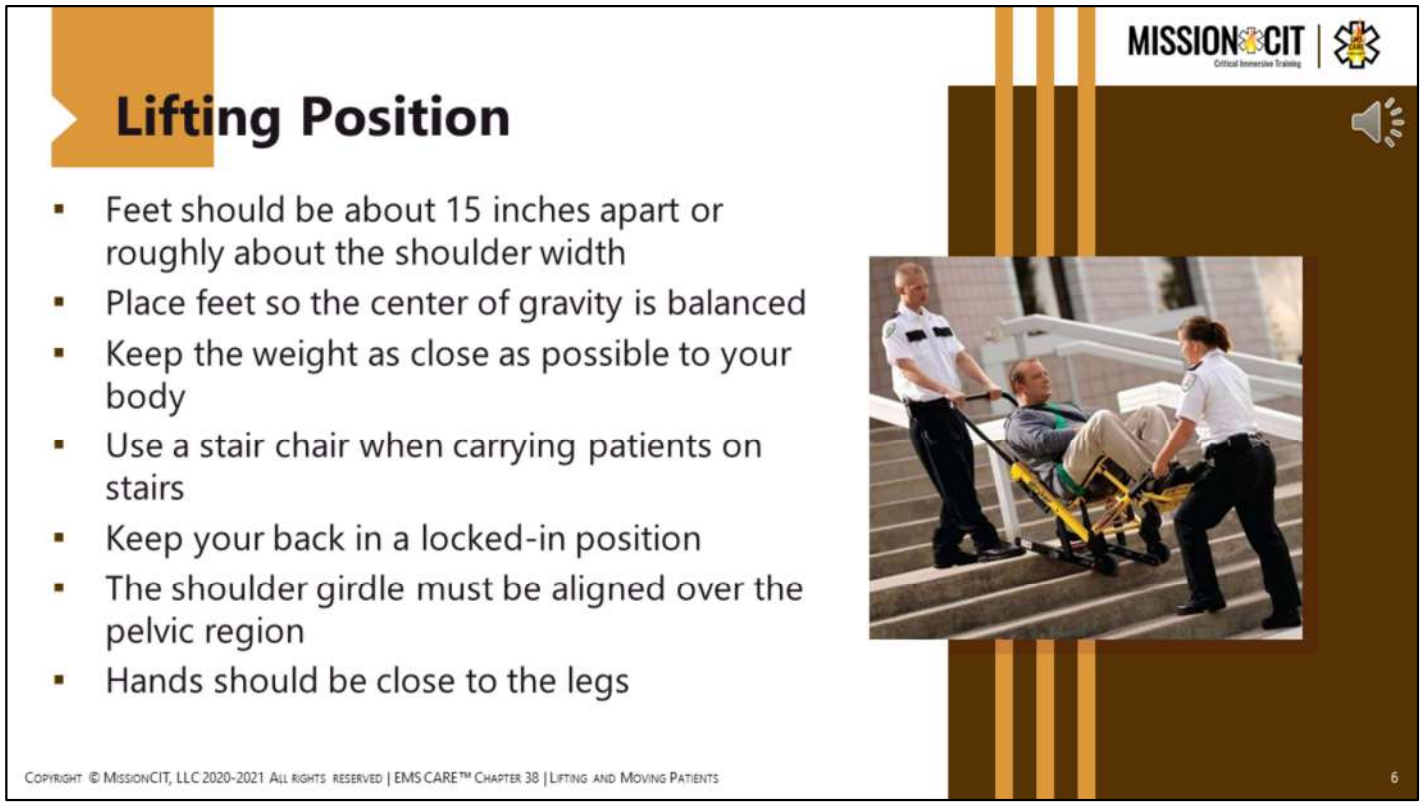


The position of the patient depends on the chief complaint for which you were called. For example, a patient reporting chest pain or respiratory distress should be placed in a position that feels most comfortable for the patient. The same is true for a patient who feels nauseous or is vomiting.

In the case of patients who are in shock, a supine position is most preferred.

Patients who are in the late stages of pregnancy should be positioned on their left side.

If a patient is unresponsive but doesn't have a spinal injury, such a patient should be in the recovery position. In this position, the body is placed facing downwards and slightly to the left side, supported by bent limbs.

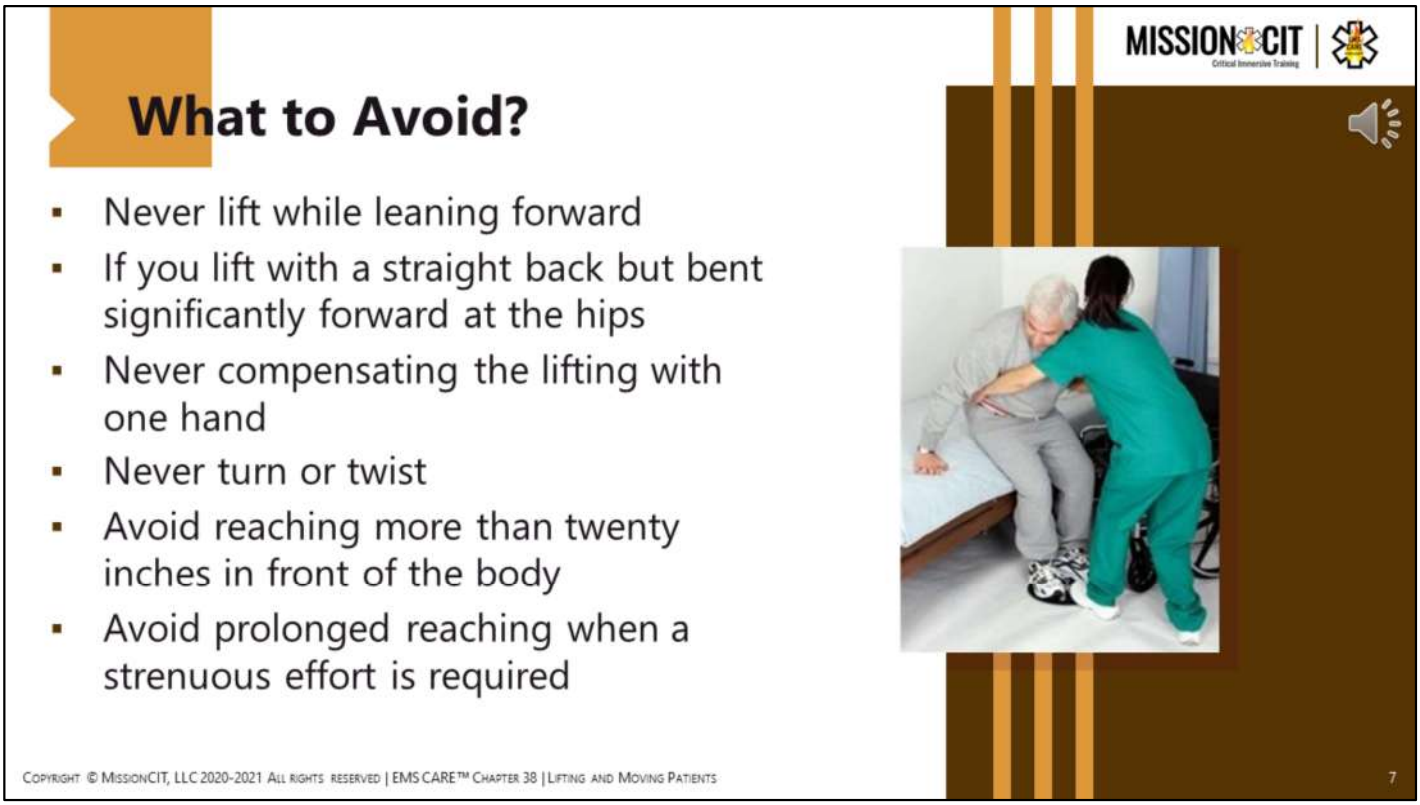


This brings up the question of what is the appropriate lifting position for you?

Well, here are some rules to follow.

- Position your feet properly. They should be about 15 inches apart or roughly about the shoulder width.
- Place feet so the center of gravity is balanced.
- Keep the weight as close as possible to your body.
- Use a stair chair when carrying patients on stairs.
- Keep your back in a locked-in position.
- The shoulder girdle must be aligned over the pelvic region.
- Hands should be close to the legs.

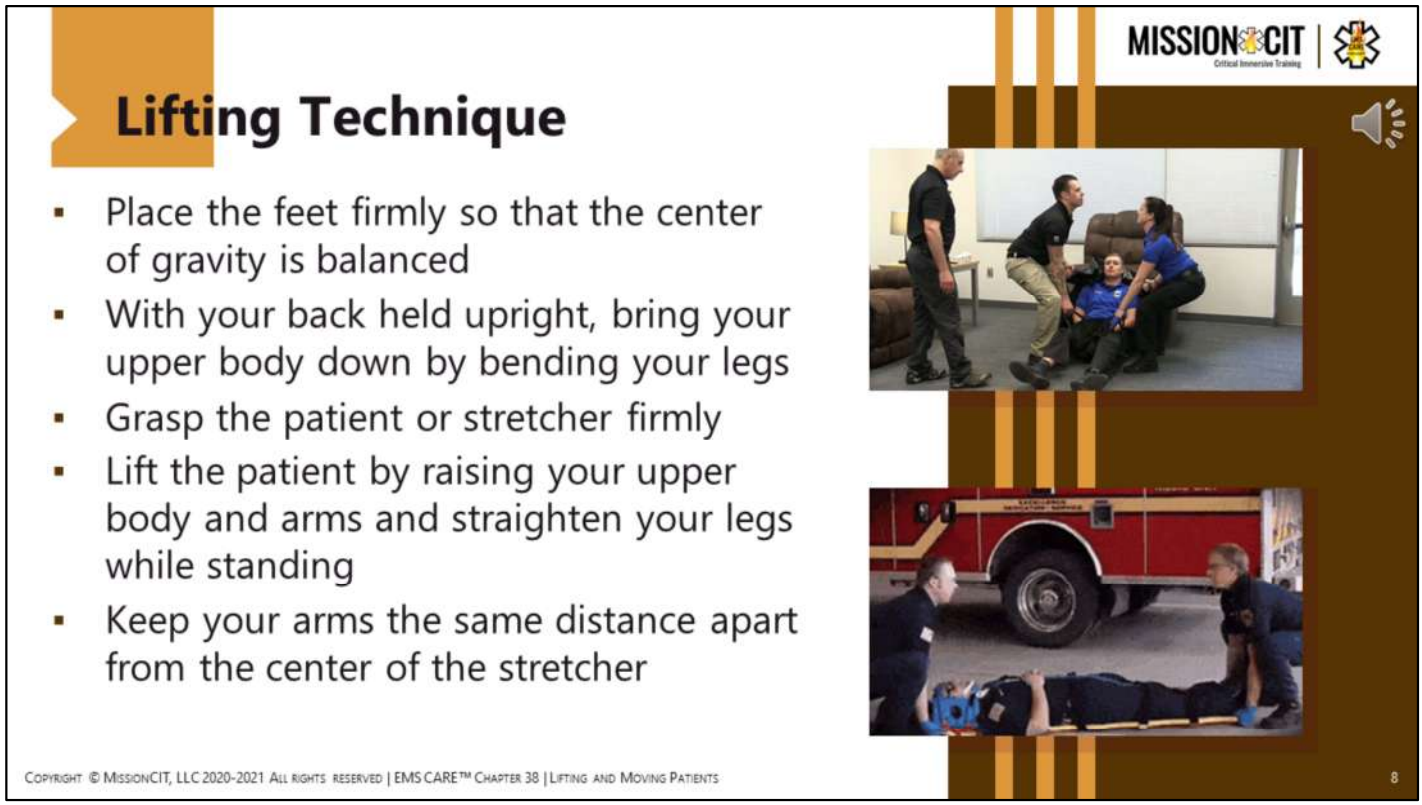
This lifting position reduces your chances of injury. Remember, lifting patients is a technical skill that requires repeated training and practice. Also, staying fit greatly reduces injuries.



Here are some things you must avoid at all costs while lifting a patient.

- Never lift while leaning forward as you can injure your back
- Likewise, if you lift with a straight back but bent significantly forward at the hips
- Never compensating the lifting with one hand
- Never turn or twist
- Avoid reaching more than twenty inches in front of the body
- Avoid prolonged reaching when a strenuous effort is required

For a 250-pound patient, make sure there are at least four people to carry and also estimate the weight limitations of the equipment used for carrying the patient.



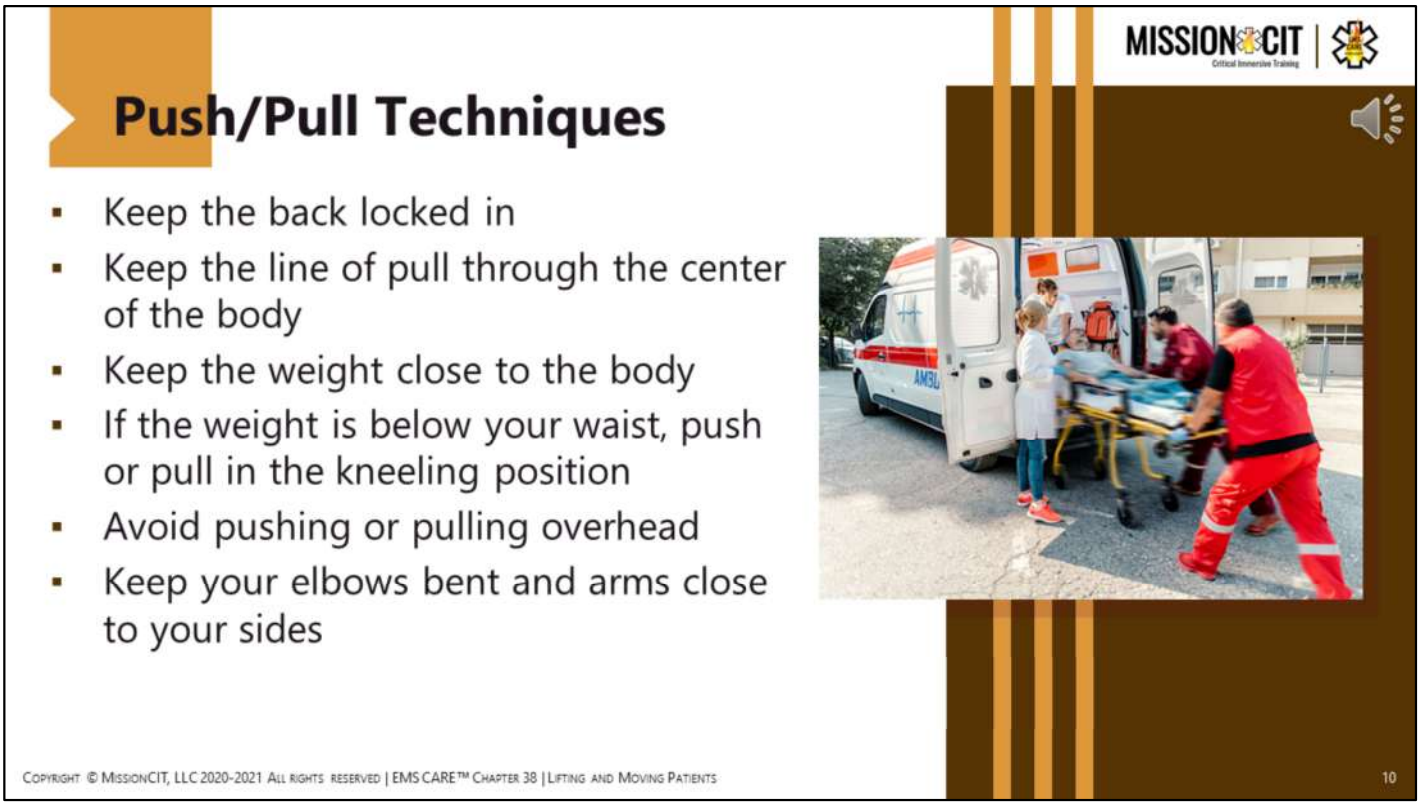
Now that we know what to avoid, let's see the right lifting technique that you must follow.

- Place the feet firmly so that the center of gravity is balanced
- With your back held upright, bring your upper body down by bending your legs
- Grasp the patient or stretcher firmly
- Lift the patient by raising your upper body and arms and straighten your legs while standing
- Keep your arms the same distance apart from the center of the stretcher



Moving on, let's talk about power grip.

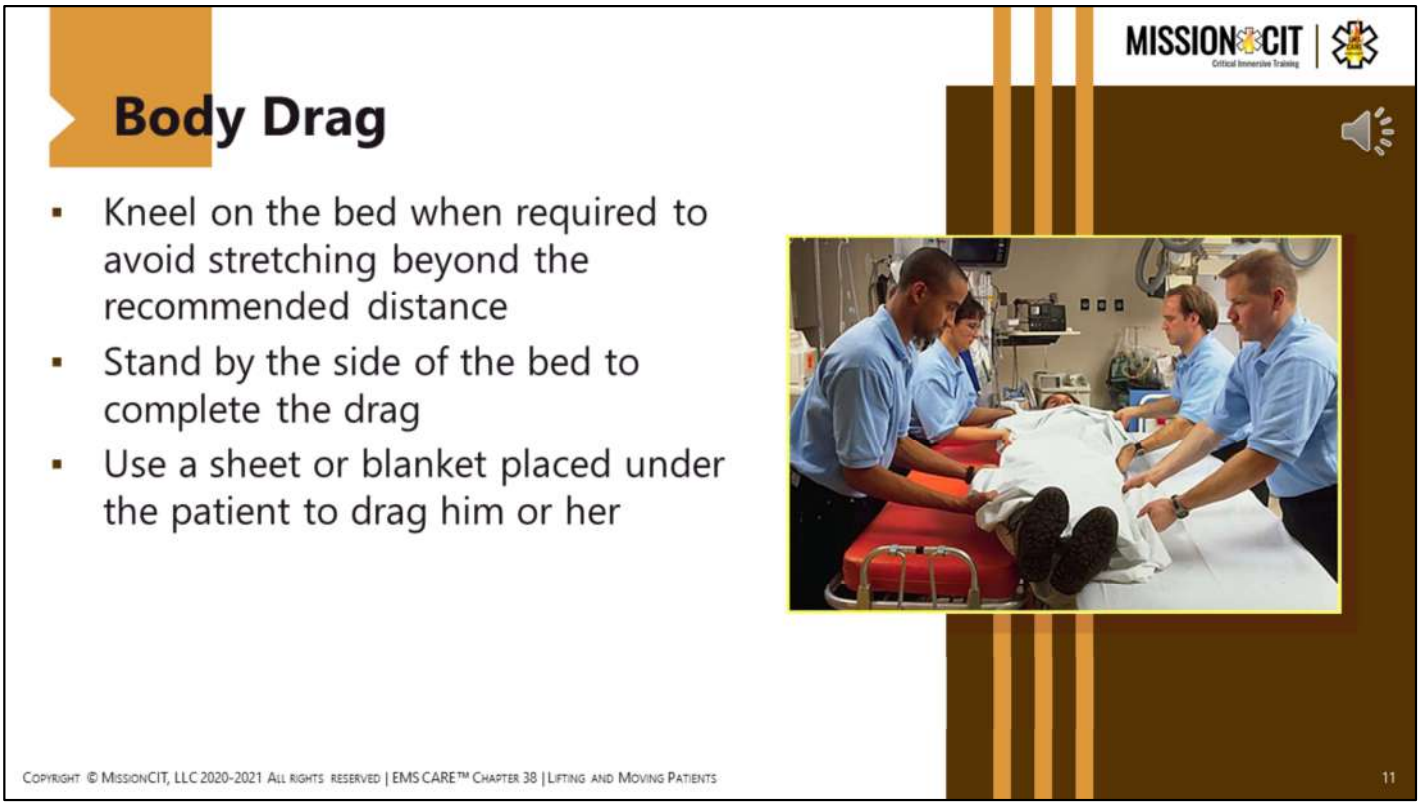
This grip gives the maximum force from hands. In this grip, keep the palm facing up. The hands must be about 10 inches apart and all the fingers must be at the same angle. When you use a curved palm, you will fully support the handle.



Should you push or pull while moving?

A ground rule is, push whenever possible and always choose it over pulling. While pushing or pulling,

- Keep the back locked in
- Keep the line of pull through the center of the body
- Keep the weight close to the body
- If the weight is below your waist, push or pull in the kneeling position
- Avoid pushing or pulling overhead
- Keep your elbows bent and arms close to your sides



A common push or pull situation will be when you have to drag a patient to safety or to get to a wheelchair.

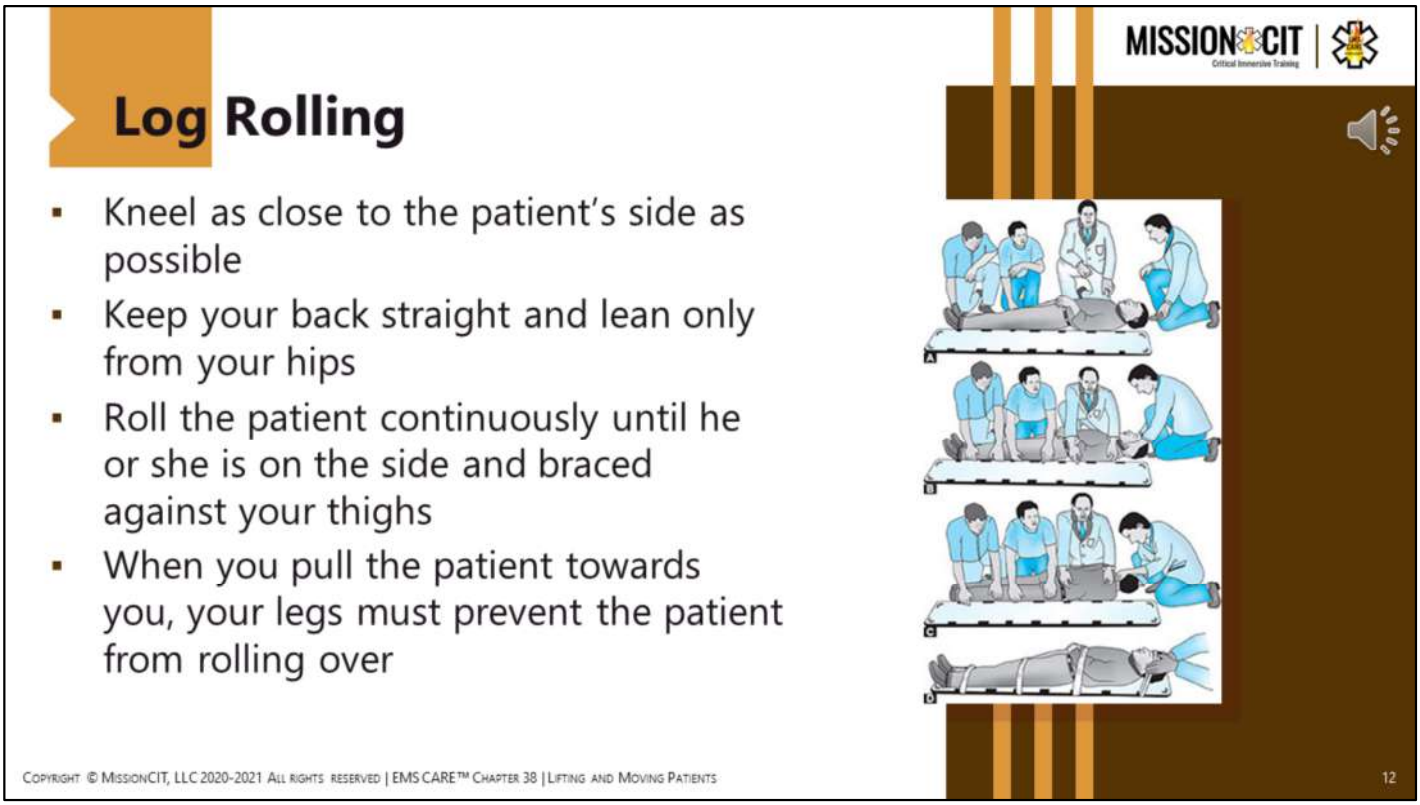
In such a situation, keep your back locked and straight by tightening the abdominal muscles. Likewise, make sure to kneel and extend your arms, but no more than 15 to 20 inches in front of you. Alternate between pulling and pushing the patient by flexing your arms and repositioning yourself as needed.

If you have to drag a patient across a bed,

- Kneel on the bed when required to avoid stretching beyond the recommended distance
- Stand by the side of the bed to complete the drag
- Ideally, use a sheet or blanket placed under the patient to drag him or her

When it's time to transfer the patient from the stretcher to the bed in a hospital, ensure that the stretcher is slightly higher than the bed. Also, kneel on the bed and drag in increments.

While doing all this, ensure the patient’s safety as well.

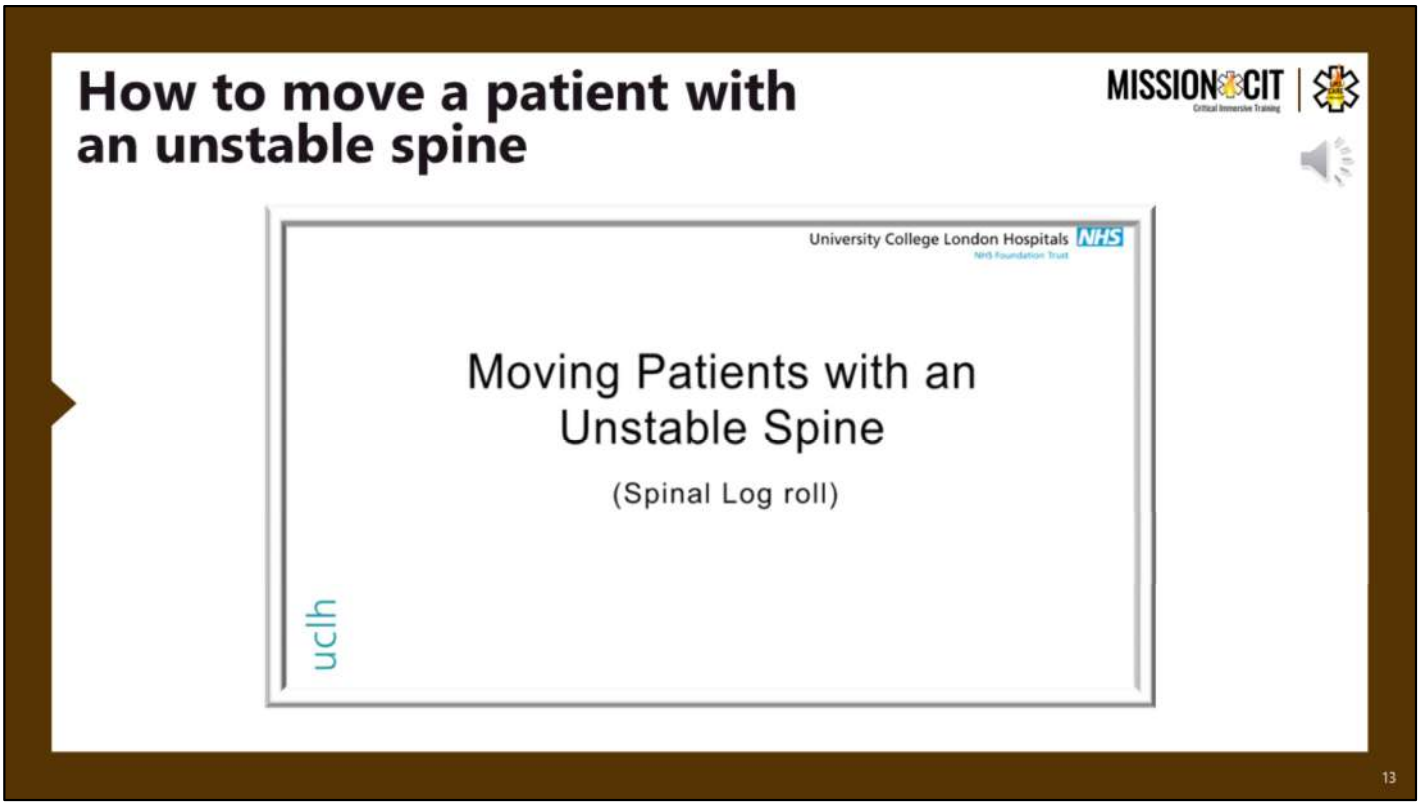


Another common push and pull strategy you'll use is log rolling.

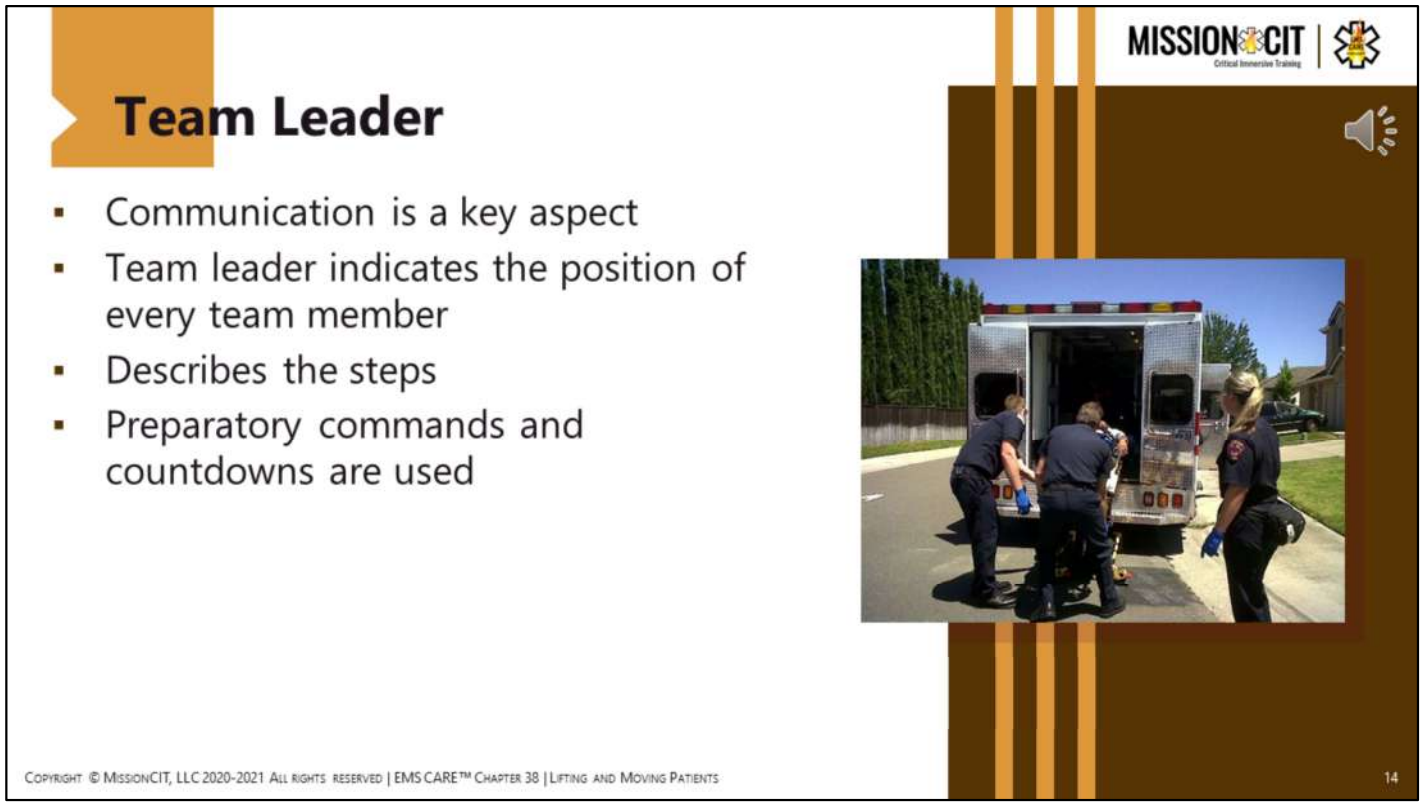
As the name suggests, you will log roll the patient onto his or her side to place a patient on the backboard.

While doing this,

- Kneel as close to the patient's side as possible
- Keep your back straight and lean only from your hips
- Roll the patient continuously until he or she is on the side and braced against your thighs
- When you pull the patient towards you, your legs must prevent the patient from rolling over



This video is from the University College London Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust. It shows a demonstration of the safe turning, moving and transferring of a patient with a suspected unstable spine.

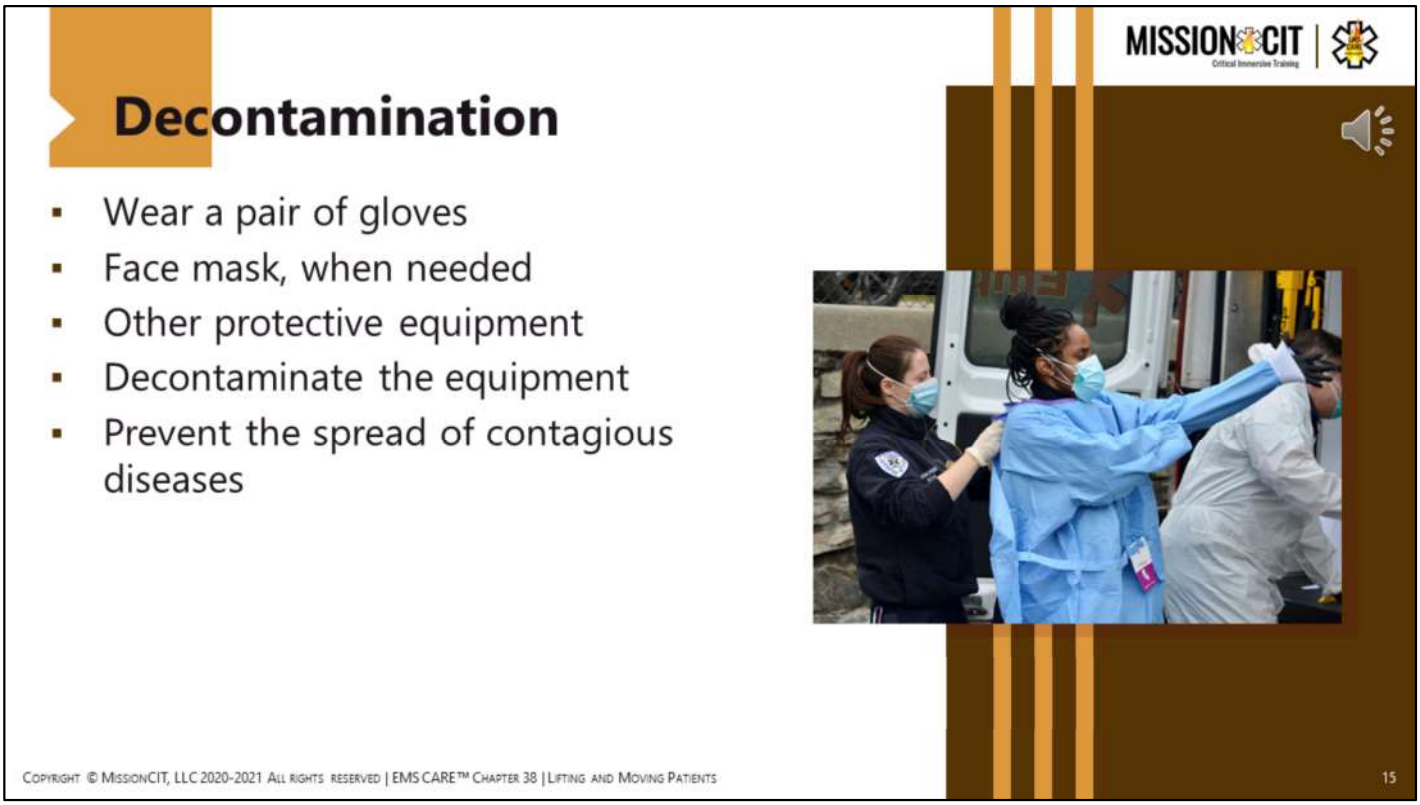


Moving on, let's talk a bit about communication and coordination.

Communication is a key aspect of any act, and it applies to lifting patients too. All the team actions must be coordinated so everyone knows their exact role. For this, a team leader is required, and this could be anyone from the team who is pre-designated to have this position.

The team leader indicates where each team member should be while lifting. He or she rapidly describes the steps that must be followed and the precautions to be followed. These steps are based on the condition of the patient and the surroundings.

Many times, preparatory commands and countdowns are used to motivate team members and to complete the task successfully.



Finally, let's talk about decontamination.

Make sure you wear a pair of gloves while handling patients and a face mask when needed. Also, wear other protective equipment based on the circumstances.

You must decontaminate the equipment after patient use.

Such precautions are necessary for the safety of yourself, your crew, and future patients who may use the same equipment. It will be a key step to prevent the spread of contagious diseases.

With this, we come to the end of this lesson and in the next one, Missah will talk about some of the equipment that can be used for lifting and moving patients.