

On the Technical Side... *Resolutions*



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A New Year dawns, and along with it come the resolutions. We resolve to do things differently in the New Year than what we've done in the past year, assuming that we've learned from our mistakes and set ourselves focused with the intent of not recreating the mistakes of the past. In the previous Technical Side, we addressed practicing what we preach, i.e. making sure that we sit, stand, and address our customers with proper body mechanics. People do watch what we do... but what about when we think that no one is watching? We've done our best to wow the customer with the presentation – put the chair on its best light, and left with high confidence that a more than substantial purchase order is imminent. Wheeling the demo back to the van, whether its on an off-street or in the catacombs of a parking garage, it comes the time to load the chair into the van and be off to the next appointment.

Here's the chair, here's the van. The chair is not going to load itself, especially when we have the expectations of the next appointment swirling in our head. Just put the chair in the van and get going – we don't have to think about it, right? Wrong. Although you really do want to train yourself to use proper body mechanics as a way of life, you need to take a second and plan your lift, prepare yourself physically and mentally for the work you're about to perform.

Sound hokey? Consider this - the majority of accidents and injuries come just at that point – when the unexpected happens. There is something to that old saying – fail to plan, plan to fail.

How do we prepare ourselves? First, prepare the chair. Lower the seat pan all the way down, move the arms down in their lowest position and put them in as close to the chair as possible. Lower the back and make sure that the back angle is vertical. If it has a neckroll, bring that down to the lowest point.

Open the door(s) of the van and plan where you're going to put the chair., making sure that you have enough space to put the chair right at the opening without having to manipulate the chair over obstacles.

Stand in front of the chair, feet about shoulder width apart. Take a deep breath and slowly exhale while thinking “preserve the curves, preserve the curves” (i.e making sure to keep your back straight and the curves of the spine intact). Imagine the position of a football linebacker or a baseball shortstop waiting for the next hit to come their way with their knees bent, the butt outward and up with the lumbar curve exaggerated as you bend with your knees and with one hand grab the chair at the back of the seat pan. Test the weight of the chair by slowly pulling up slightly on the back of the seat pan as you gauge how much effort to use to raise the chair. Place the other hand on the front of the seat pan for leverage as you pull the chair toward you and up while lifting with your legs, not by bending at the waist. Use a smooth motion to lift the chair up over the bumper or side door sill and smoothly guide it into the van. With high back chairs, the back of the chair may end up resting against your shoulder as you lift the chair - getting the chair close to your chest while lifting with your legs provides the best balance of the muscles. Once the chair is in the van, take a second to secure the chair so that it doesn't slide around and provide a distraction while driving.

Take a breath and congratulate yourself on another successful smooth lift. Now off to the next appointment, remembering to reverse the order when lifting the chair out of the van. Bend at the knees, preserve the curves, and keep the load close to the body. Take good care of your body, and it will take care of you... it's in our best interest to plan – even if it only takes seconds – so that we do stay healthy and able to keep that smile wide for the next customer. Happy selling!