

Hospital Lift Teams Keep Nurses at the Bedside
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Problem: Heavier patients and older nurses increase the risks for back injuries associated with patient handling.

Evidence: Reducing risks associated with patient handling may be a powerful force to keep experienced nurses *at the bedside* and attract novice nurses to begin a career free of back pain. Evidence suggests that training in body mechanics and purchasing expensive lifting equipment **fail** to prevent patient handling injuries.

Strategy: Lift Team Service for an 800+ bed medical center was developed, trialed and permanently implemented based on favorable outcomes. The Lift Team model for service was developed by an interdisciplinary committee over a 3-year period based on available evidence and continuous evaluation.

Evaluation: Back injuries, lift team services per patient day, and hours returned to Nursing Services.

Results: Outcomes have exceeded expectations. 8 Member Lift Team provides an average of 21,000 assists for an 800+ bed medical center. Nursing Service gains an average of 2000+ hours a year to care for patients. The rate of back injuries for nursing has decreased from 0.53 to 0.21 per 1000 patient days. There have been **NO** injuries of any Lift Team member or RN using the Lift Team service during the life of the project, which is a function of ongoing training, fitness requirements and competency evaluations.

Recommendations: Lift Teams significantly reduce the risk of back injury for nurses. Patient and staff satisfaction is increased with use of a Lift Team

Bibliography: O'Malley P, Emsley H, Davis D, Roark S, Ondercin C, Donaldson C. No Brawn Needed: Develop and Implement a Lift Team Policy to Improve Outcomes. *Nursing Management*. 2006; 37(4): 26-34.