

## Gait Belt Usage

A gait belt is a safety device used by a helper to assist someone while moving between surfaces or walking and to help support or prevent falls. A gait belt also prevents injuries for the helper.

A gait belt is typically a strap made of canvas, nylon, vinyl or leather with a metal or plastic clasp that fits around the patient's waist, or their center of gravity. The exception to this rule is when a patient has an incision, colostomy, feeding tube or other line/tube that comes from the waist area and could be damaged by a gait belt in this region. For these circumstances, a spot higher on the patient's torso would be a better choice for application of the gait belt.

### APPLYING A GAIT BELT:

1. Put the belt around the patient's waist with the clasp in the front.
2. Thread the gait belt through the clasp and tighten the belt until snug around the patient's body. You should only be able to slip two fingers under the belt.

### USE OF GAIT BELT:

1. Once the gait belt is on the patient, the helper should position themselves in front of the patient if the patient needs assistance to stand. The helper should hold the gait belt in the front, maintain a straight back and bend their knees in order to use their legs to lift.
2. Once the patient is standing and stable, the helper should move to the patient's side to assist with walking, and the patient should hold an assistive device as needed. Be sure to grasp the belt with the palm facing up, to ensure a natural grasp reflex, if needed.
3. When the patient is ready to sit down, the helper should hold onto the gait belt and bend their knees in order to assist the patient to sit slowly.
4. The gait belt should then be removed from the patient.

### WHERE TO FIND GAIT BELTS:

Gait belts can be obtained from your local medical supply store or retail pharmacies. Gait belts usually cost \$10-15 and are not typically covered by insurance.