

6

Safety and Body Mechanics

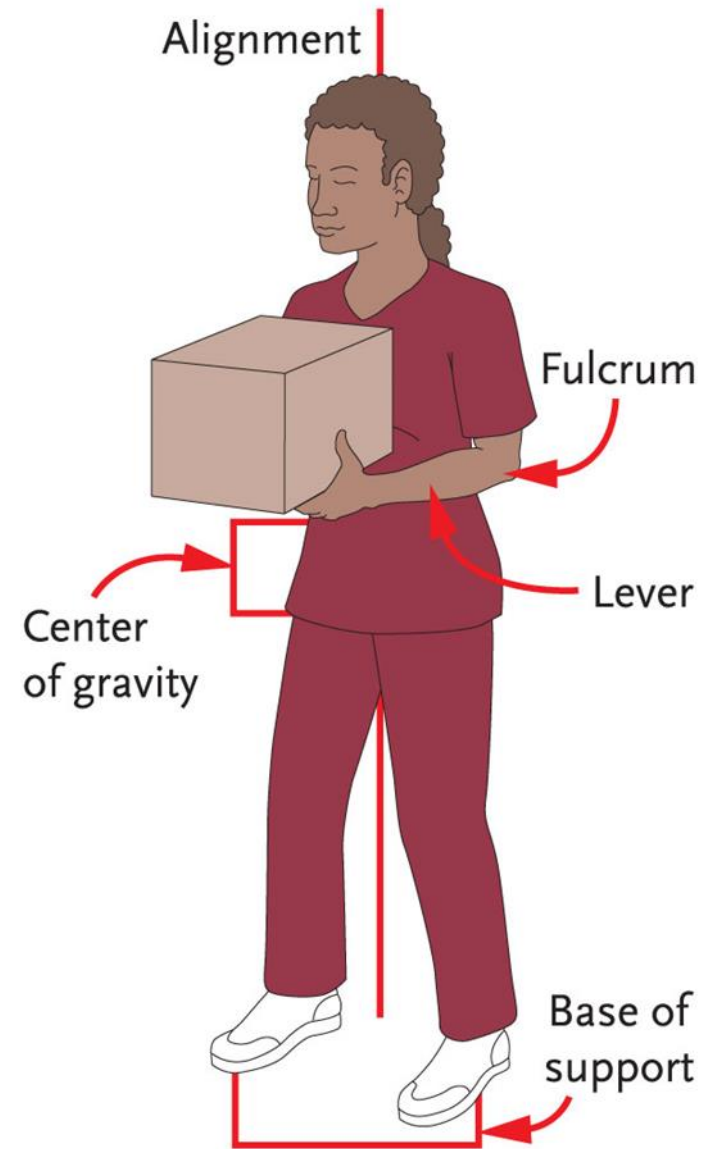


1. Explain the principles of body mechanics

Remember:

Body mechanics refers to the way the parts of the body work together when a person moves. Using proper body mechanics helps save energy and prevent injury. Understanding some basic principles of body mechanics will help keep you and your clients safe.

Key Material 6-1: Body Alignment



1. Explain the principles of body mechanics

Define the following terms:

body mechanics

the way the parts of the body work together when a person moves.

posture

the way a person holds and positions his body.

lever

something that moves an object by resting on a base of support, or fulcrum.

1. Explain the principles of body mechanics

HHAs should understand the principles of body mechanics:

Alignment

- Try to keep body in alignment, with two sides of the body as mirror images of each other
- Keep object close when lifting
- Point feet and body toward the direction you are moving
- Avoid twisting at waist

Base of support

- Wide base is more stable
- Stand with legs shoulder-width apart

1. Explain the principles of body mechanics

Principles of body mechanics (cont'd):

Fulcrum and lever

- Arm is lever
- Elbow is fulcrum
- Rest object against forearm

Center of gravity

- When standing, weight is centered in pelvis
- Low center provides greater base of support
- Bend knees when lifting

2. Apply principles of body mechanics to daily activities

Think about this question as you view the slides which follow:

How can applying the principles of body mechanics to your daily activities help to avoid injury and use less energy?

Key Material 6-2: Lifting Heavy Objects from the Floor



2. Apply principles of body mechanics to daily activities

When lifting a heavy object from the floor

- Spread your feet shoulder-width apart
- Bend your knees
- Use muscles in your thighs, upper arms, and shoulders to lift the object
- Pull object close to your body
- When you stand up, push with hip and thigh muscles
- Pivot your feet instead of twisting at the waist
- Always face the object or person you are moving

2. Apply principles of body mechanics to daily activities

Remember these general guidelines for proper body mechanics:

- Assess the situation and clear the path first
- Use both arms and hands when lifting, pushing, or carrying objects
- Spread feet shoulder-width apart and use the muscles in the thighs, upper arms, and shoulders when lifting an object
- Hold objects close to you
- Push or slide objects rather than pulling them
- Avoid bending and reaching as much as possible

2. Apply principles of body mechanics to daily activities

General guidelines for proper body mechanics (cont'd):

- When making an adjustable bed, adjust the bed height to a safe working level, usually waist high
- Use a good stance when bending and bend at the knees
- Avoid twisting at the waist; turn your whole body instead and face what you are moving
- Get help when possible
- Talk to clients before moving them
- Place your feet about shoulder-width apart to help a client sit up, stand up, or walk

Key Material 6-3: Falling Client



2. Apply principles of body mechanics to daily activities

Think about this question:

What is meant by the statement, “Never try to ‘catch’ a falling client” and what is the correct response for assisting the falling client to the floor?

2. Apply principles of body mechanics to daily activities

Remember:

Maintain a wide base of support and low center of gravity. This will prevent injury to you and to the client.

3. List ways to adapt the home to principles of proper body mechanics

Know the following strategies to help apply good body mechanics in the home:

- Have the right tools for the job
- Have footrests and pillows available
- Keep tools, supplies, and clutter off the floor
- Sit when you can
- Use transfer belts
- Look for safety hazards and report them

4. Identify five common types of accidents in the home

Define the following terms:

fracture

a broken bone.

disorientation

confusion about person, place, or time.

4. Identify five common types of accidents in the home

1. Falls

- Causes: unsafe environment, loss of abilities, disease, medications, loss of vision, gait or balance problems, weakness, paralysis, and disorientation
- Prevention:
 - Clear walkways
 - Avoid waxing floors, and use nonskid mats
 - Wear nonskid shoes with tied laces
 - Wear clothing that fits properly
 - Keep frequently-used personal items close
 - Clean up spills

4. Identify five common types of accidents in the home

- Fall Prevention (cont'd):
 - Mark hazardous areas
 - Improve lighting
 - Lock wheelchair wheels
 - Lock bed wheels before giving care or transfers
 - Return beds to lowest position after care
 - Get help when moving clients
 - Offer help with elimination need often. Respond to requests for help immediately
 - Leave furniture in same place

4. Identify five common types of accidents in the home

Define the following term:

scalds

burns caused by hot liquids.

4. Identify five common types of accidents in the home

2. Burns

- Causes: dry heat (iron, stoves, other electric appliances), wet heat (hot water or other liquids, steam), or chemicals (lye, acids)
- Prevention:
 - Roll up sleeves
 - Check that stove and appliances are off
 - Set hot water heater at 120-130°F
 - Check temperatures of liquids with thermometer or on inside of your wrist before serving

4. Identify five common types of accidents in the home

- Burns Prevention (cont'd):
 - Be careful with space heaters
 - Use low settings on hair dryers
 - Report frayed cords
 - Let clients know if you are about to pour or set down hot liquid
 - Pour hot drinks away from clients and keep away from edges of tables
 - Make sure clients are sitting down before serving hot drinks

4. Identify five common types of accidents in the home

3. Poisoning

- Cause: ingesting harmful substances
- Prevention:
 - Lock harmful products away
 - Check medication for expired dates
 - Check refrigerator and cabinets for spoiled food. Investigate odors
 - Post Poison Control Center number

4. Identify five common types of accidents in the home

4. Cuts

- Cause: sharp objects
- Prevention:
 - Keep sharp objects away from children
 - Lock sharp objects away if clients are confused
 - Cut away from body while preparing food
 - Know first aid for cuts

4. Identify five common types of accidents in the home

5. Choking

- Causes: eating, drinking, or swallowing medication; babies putting objects into mouth; unconsciousness, ill, or weakened clients
- Prevention:
 - Keep small objects out of reach
 - Cut food
 - Position infants on their backs for sleeping
 - Eat sitting up
 - Provide thickened liquids

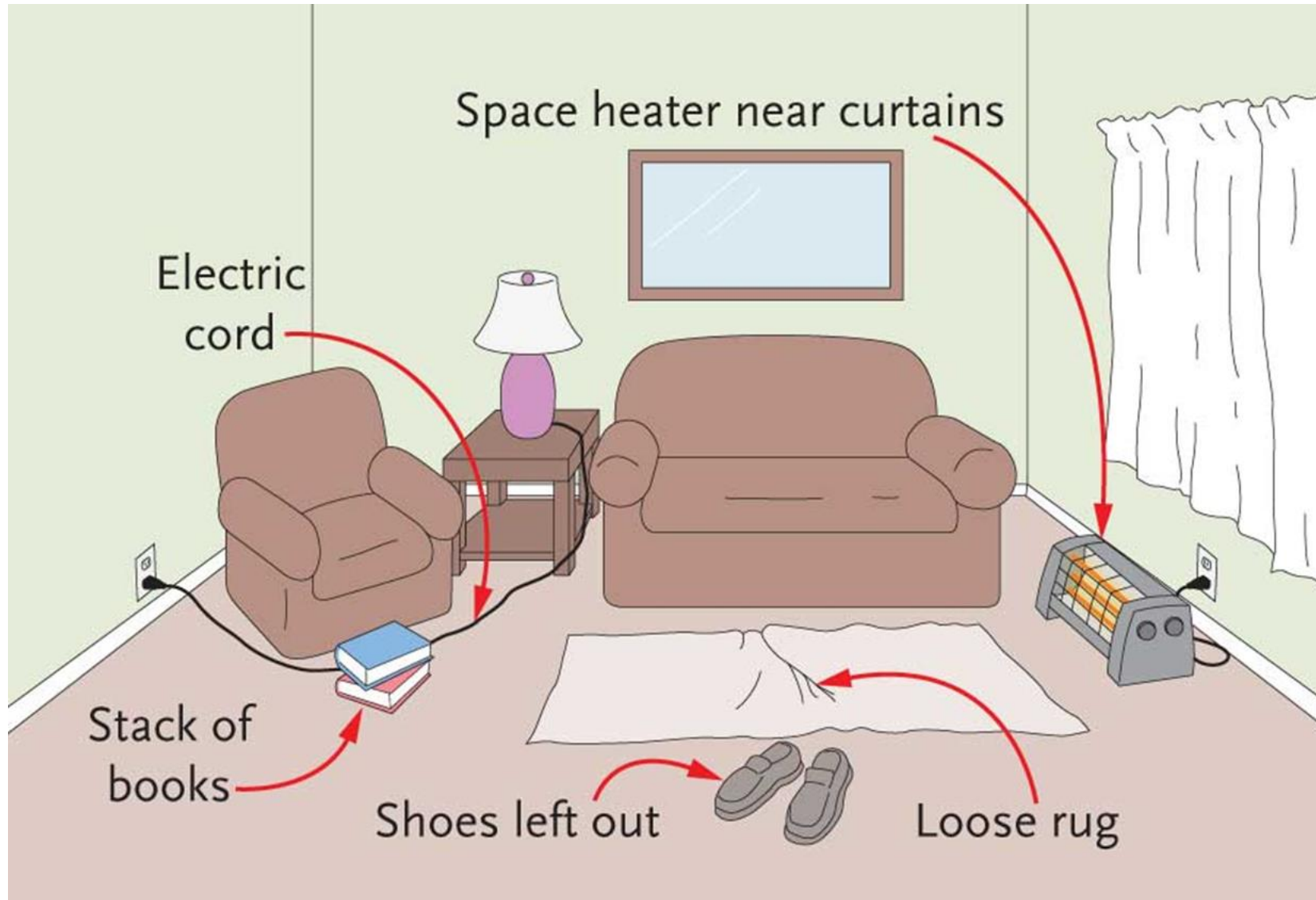
4. Identify five common types of accidents in the home

Think about these questions as you view the following transparencies:

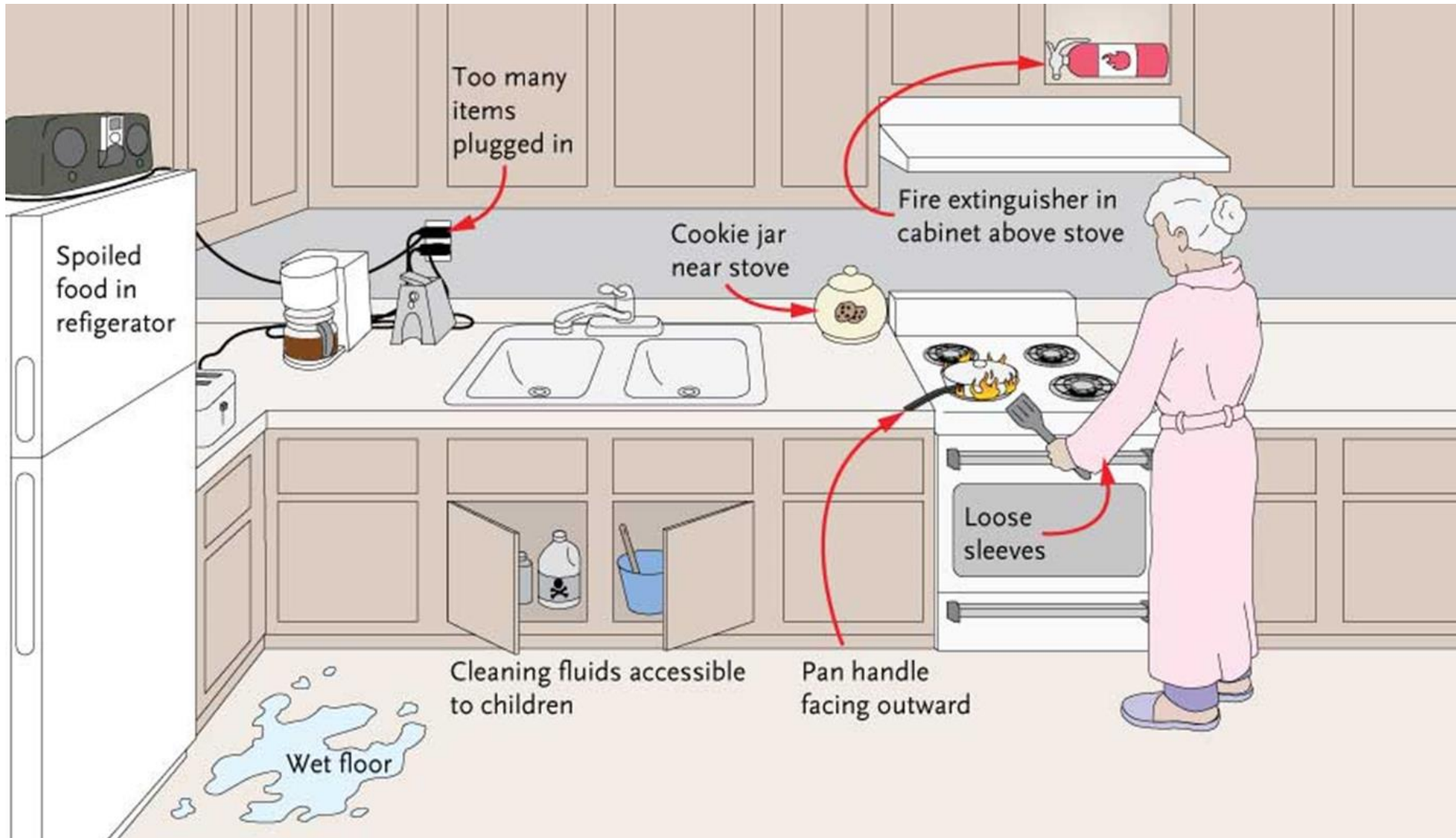
What kind of hazards can you see in this picture (potential causes of falls, burns, etc.)?

What would you do to make this room safer?

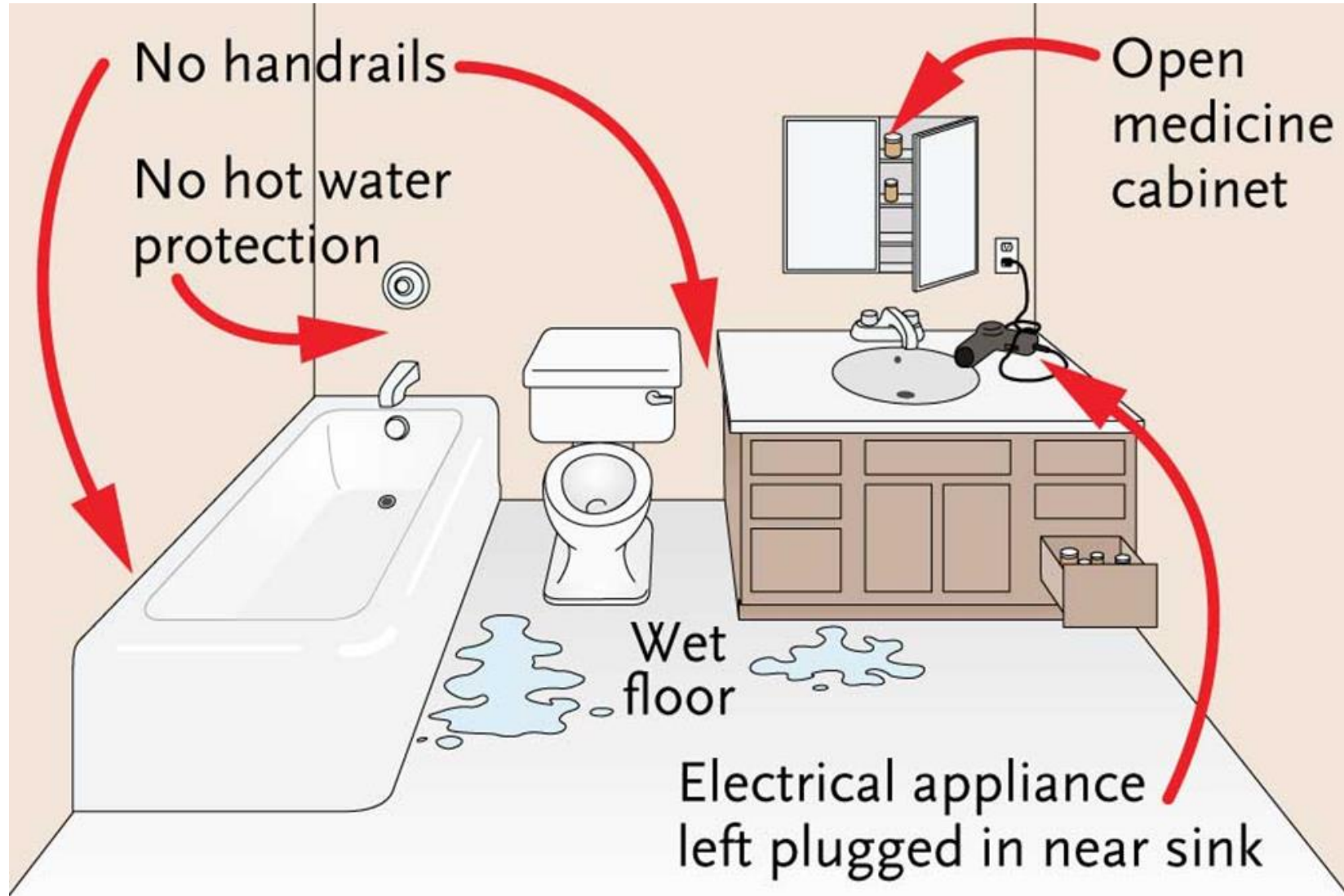
Key Material 6-4: Hazards



Key Material 6-5: Hazards



Key Material 6-6: Hazards



5. List home fire safety guidelines and describe what to do in case of fire

HHA's should know these fire safety guidelines and their role in fire safety:

- Recognize and report hazards
- HHA Role: Report damaged equipment, space heaters near equipment, flammable materials near equipment, frayed wires, and careless smoking
- Reduce hazards while you work

HHA Role: Never wear loose clothing while working; stay near kitchen when baking and cooking; store flammables away from stove; do not store items that may attract children near the stove; discourage smoking in bed; follow instructions for e-cigarettes; do not leave when dryer is on; report smell of gas immediately; turn off space heaters, and check smoke alarms monthly and replace batteries.

5. List home fire safety guidelines and describe what to do in case of fire

Fire safety guidelines and the HHA's role (cont'd):

- Have fire extinguishers on hand.
- HHA Role: Check that homes have unexpired extinguishers, know where they are located, and know how to use them

5. List home fire safety guidelines and describe what to do in case of fire

To use a fire extinguisher, use **PASS**

HHA Role:

- **P**ull the pin
- **A**im at the base of the fire when spraying
- **S**queeze the handle
- **S**weep back and forth at the base of the fire

5. List home fire safety guidelines and describe what to do in case of fire

In case of fire use **RACE**

HHA Role:

- **R**escue anyone in danger if you are not in danger
- **A**ctivate 911
- **C**ontain fire if possible
- **E**xtinguish or call fire department

5. List home fire safety guidelines and describe what to do in case of fire

HHAs should remember these guidelines for helping clients and their family members exit the home safely:

- Remain calm
- Know how to exit
- Do not try to put out a large fire
- Know where children's windows are
- Unblock window exits

5. List home fire safety guidelines and describe what to do in case of fire

Guidelines for helping clients and their family members exit the home safely (cont'd):

- Stay low in room to escape
- Do not use elevators
- Check for heat coming from closed doors
- Do not run if clothing is on fire
- Use “stop, drop, and roll” fire safety technique
- Use damp covering over face
- Go to designated meeting place

6. Identify ways to reduce the risk of automobile accidents

These tips can help to reduce the risk of auto accidents:

- Plan your route
- Minimize distractions
- Use turn signals
- Use caution when backing up
- Drive at a safe speed
- Always wear your seat belt

6. Identify ways to reduce the risk of automobile accidents

Think about this question:

Which of the tips on the previous slide do you already do on a regular basis?

6. Identify ways to reduce the risk of automobile accidents

When driving it is important to never

- Text
- Email
- Talk on the phone

6. Identify ways to reduce the risk of automobile accidents

Critical Thinking: Conversation Starter

- Do you think you are a safe driver?
- Have you ever gotten any traffic tickets?
- Have you ever been in an auto accident? Could it have been prevented?
- Do you look at your phone when you drive?

7. Identify guidelines for using a car on the job

When using a car on the job an HHA should remember these guidelines:

- Park in safe areas
- Lock doors
- Do not leave valuables in the car
- Carry valid car insurance
- Do not keep registration in the car
- Keep track of miles for work
- Keep car in good working order. Keep a spare tire on hand

8. Identify guidelines for working in high-crime areas

HHAs should remember these guidelines for staying safe in high-crime areas:

- Park in well-lit areas
- Leave valuables at home
- Hold your home care bag tightly
- Lock car
- Walk with confidence

8. Identify guidelines for working in high-crime areas

Guidelines for staying safe in high-crime areas (cont'd):

- Carry a whistle
- Carry keys in hand
- Do not sit in car
- Avoid unsafe areas after dark
- Leave areas of concern immediately

8. Identify guidelines for working in high-crime areas

Guidelines for staying safe in high-crime areas (cont'd):

- Avoid strangers
- Call before visit
- Avoid vacant houses
- Ask for escort
- Call the office at the end of the day. Give someone your schedule

8. Identify guidelines for working in high-crime areas

Critical Thinking: Conversation Starter

- Have you had any experiences in which you unknowingly placed yourself at risk for crime? How could that situation have been avoided or handled better?
- Do you use any type of equipment to protect yourself (like mace or whistles) when you are out on your own?
- Have you ever taken a personal safety training class?
- What safety measures does the city take to protect the public from crime where you live?

Handout 6-1: Restraints and Restraint Alternatives

A **restraint** is a physical or chemical way to restrict voluntary movement or behavior. A physical restraint is any method, device, material, or equipment that restricts a person's freedom of movement. Types of physical restraints include vest restraints, belt restraints, wrist/ankle restraints, and mitt restraints. Chemical restraints are medications used to control a person's mood or behavior.

Handout 6-1: Restraints and Restraint Alternatives (*cont'd*)

An enabler is equipment or a device that promotes a client's safety, comfort, independence, and mobility. Wheelchairs, geriatric chairs, cushions and pillows, and certain types of assistive devices, such as special utensils, are examples of enablers. However, if a person cannot remove an enabler independently, it may be considered a restraint. Raised side rails on beds and geriatric chairs with tray tables attached may be considered enablers or physical restraints, depending upon their intended use and the person's condition or abilities. If a person cannot remove an attached or locked tray table, a geriatric chair may be considered a restraint. Raised side rails may be considered restraints, depending on their intended use and on the person's abilities.



Handout 6-1: Restraints and Restraint Alternatives (*cont'd*)

In the past, restraints were commonly used to prevent confused people from wandering, to prevent falls, to keep people from injuring themselves or others, or to prevent people from pulling out tubing needed for treatment. Restraints were often overused by caregivers, and clients and patients were injured. This led to new laws restricting the use of restraints.

Handout 6-1: Restraints and Restraint Alternatives (*cont'd*)

Today, restraint use is prohibited unless the restraint is medically necessary. Restraints are only used a last resort and only after less restrictive measures have been tried. If a restraint is needed, a doctor must order it. Very specific guidelines apply to carrying out a restraint order, including frequent monitoring of the person. This is important because people have been severely injured and have died due to improper restraint use and lack of monitoring. Home health aides cannot use physical restraints unless a doctor has ordered it in the care plan and they have been trained in the restraint's use. It is against the law for staff to apply a restraint for convenience or to discipline a client. Home health aides can check with their supervisor for policies regarding restraints.

Handout 6-1: Restraints and Restraint Alternatives (*cont'd*)

There are many serious problems associated with restraint use, including the following:

- Pressure injuries
- Pneumonia
- Risk of suffocation (**suffocation** is the stoppage of breathing from a lack of oxygen or excess of carbon dioxide in the body that may result in unconsciousness or death)
- Reduced blood circulation
- Stress on the heart
- Incontinence
- Constipation
- Muscle **atrophy** (weakening or wasting away of the muscle)
- Loss of bone mass
- Poor appetite and malnutrition
- Depression and/or withdrawal

Handout 6-1: Restraints and Restraint Alternatives (*cont'd*)

- Sleep disorders
- Loss of dignity
- Loss of independence
- Stress and anxiety
- Increased agitation (anxiety, restlessness)
- Loss of self-esteem
- Severe injury
- Death

Home health aides must never use restraints unless their supervisor has told them to do so and they have been instructed in the proper use of the restraint. They must follow the care plan. The care plan will include instructions on frequent monitoring and repositioning.

Handout 6-1: Restraints and Restraint Alternatives (*cont'd*)

Because restraint use is prohibited or restricted in many states, creative ideas have been developed that help avoid the need for restraints. **Restraint alternatives** are measures used in place of a restraint or that reduce the need for a restraint. Many scientific studies have shown that restraints are not needed. People tend to respond better to the use of creative ways to reduce tension, pulling at tubes, wandering, and boredom. Examples of restraint alternatives include the following:

- Make sure call signals are within reach, and respond to call signals promptly.
- Use fall prevention and other safety techniques, such as improving lighting.
- Take the client on a walk. The doctor or nurse may add exercise to the care plan.
- Encourage activities and independence. Encourage participation in social activities. Increase visits and social interaction.

Handout 6-1: Restraints and Restraint Alternatives (*cont'd*)

- Give frequent help with toileting. Help with cleaning immediately after an episode of incontinence. Make sure clients are clean, dry, and comfortable.
- Offer reading materials that the client enjoys. Read to the client if needed.
- Distract or redirect interest. Give the client a repetitive task.
- Offer food or drink.
- Decrease the noise level. Listen to soothing music. Offer massage or use relaxation techniques.
- Reduce pain levels through medication. Monitor the client closely and report any complaints of pain to your supervisor.

Handout 6-1: Restraints and Restraint Alternatives (*cont'd*)

- Provide familiar caregivers. Increase the number of caregivers with family and volunteers.
- Use a team approach to meeting needs. Offer training to teach gentle approaches to difficult people.

If a client is ordered to have an alarm on his bed or chair, the HHA should make sure it is there and is turned on.

Critical Thinking: Case Studies

The client an HHA is visiting has unsafe working conditions in the kitchen.

- What are some areas where you could make changes to prevent injuries?

Critical Thinking: Case Studies

You are assigned to visit a client in a high-crime part of the city.

- What precautions can you take before the visit to improve your personal safety?

