

Gait Belt Basics



What is a gait belt?

A standard gait belt is a strap of material with a metal buckle on one end that can be used when transferring patients or residents. Belts come in a range of widths, lengths, materials (canvas, nylon, or leather) and colors.



How do you use a gait belt?

- Position the belt with the teeth facing away from the person's waist.
- Wrap the non-buckle (tail) end of the belt behind the person's back and around to the front threading the tail end through the opening between the metal closest to the person and the teeth of the buckle, pulling until snug. Be sure to adjust the belt, leaving two finger widths between the body and the belt, tightening once the person is in a standing position.
- Thread the tail end through the other side of the metal buckle (the one without teeth).
- For comfort, place the buckle slightly off center with the tail end tucked into the belt out of the way.

Other gait belt facts

- The gait belt is reusable and washable. It should be cleaned periodically, or when soiled, according to manufacturer recommendations.



- Gait belts can also use plastic buckles or clips, like shown above.
- Gait belts with extra handles are another option to further aid in walking or ambulating.
- **Remember:** A gait belt is not a lifting device. The purpose of the gait belt is to help prevent injury not only for the person you are caring for but also for you!



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