An information booklet for people using the Oswestry Standing Frame
Introduction

A physiotherapist has visited you at home to show you how to use the standing frame. You will also have been given a DVD with two short videos: the first showing you how to use the frame and the second, showing you some exercises you can undertake when standing in the frame. This information booklet provides complementary information and advice. It will enable both you and your standing assistant to easily check on queries you may have when you need to.

Please read this booklet carefully before you begin using the frame. If you are still unsure about any aspect, then please contact your physiotherapist who will be happy to explain further about using the frame.

Physiotherapist: ............................................

Contact details: .............................................
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Information for the Standing Assistant

Thank you for agreeing to assist with using the standing frame.

Your role is to:

- Move the frame into the correct position in the room.
- Safely assist the person to stand in the frame and sit down after standing, if needed.
- Ensure that safety issues are checked before, during and after standing.
- Ensure the diary entries are completed.
- Understand how to check for faults and report any faults.
- Take care of yourself and adhere to safety procedures.
- Contact the physiotherapist if any changes occur to your own health which prevents you from assisting.
How to use the Oswestry Standing Frame

(Help may be needed from the standing assistant with some or all of these steps)

Standing up

1. The standing assistant slides the frame into position, allowing space around the frame for easy access.

2. The frame has three straps: 1) an ankle strap at the bottom, 2) a knee strap and 3) a hip strap at the top.

3. Undo the top (hip) and bottom (ankle) strap – leave the middle (knee) strap done up, as tight as possible.

4. Push your wheelchair into the frame, as far as it will go, so that your knees are touching the knee strap. The knee strap should now be adjusted up or down to sit just below the knee caps.

5. Ensure your feet are flat on the ground, directly under the knees, hip-width apart and facing forwards. Well-positioned feet make standing much easier.

6. Make sure your knees are apart – use a rolled up towel between them if necessary.

7. Make sure that any catheter bags or tubing are pushed to one side of your knee before standing.

8. Fasten the ankle strap behind your heels. This strap stops your feet moving backwards as you stand.

9. Place your hands on the rails and move forward in the chair if possible.

10. If someone helps you to stand, they will say
“READY?” “SET,” “STAND”. On the ‘stand’ command pull yourself into a standing position with help, if necessary, from the standing assistant.

11. The standing assistant then fastens the hip (top) strap. You may find leaning forward over a pillow on the table is helpful while the hip strap is being done up. The strap should go behind the hips. **Do not sit on the strap.**

12. Always secure the end of the strap through the loop.

13. When the top strap is secure, stand up as straight as possible.

14. Keep the chair behind you in the frame with the brakes on while you are standing.

**Sitting down**

1. When you are ready to sit down, lean forwards slightly over the table to take the weight off the hip strap. Use a pillow to lean on if necessary.

2. The standing assistant should then undo the top (hip) strap.

3. Gently lower yourself down into the wheelchair with help if necessary from the assistant to guide the hips.

4. **Undo the bottom (ankle) strap** before then taking the brakes off and wheeling the chair backwards out of the frame.

5. The standing assistant will return the frame to its storage place by pushing it gently over the floor.
Hip strap
Knee strap
Ankle strap

Standing in an Oswestry standing frame

Exercises, stretches and balance activities

Early days

When you first start standing in the frame you may find it very tiring, so the aim is to gradually build up the time you spend standing. You may wish to begin with short stands of 5 minutes. Gradually, you may find that you can tolerate standing for longer periods. At first, just stand upright in the frame to get used to the position. After a while see if you can progress to doing some of the exercises, stretches or balance activities outlined below.

Using your hands to balance

Initially, you may find that you have to hold on to the rails or the table to maintain an upright position. You may find that if you let go, you tend to lean forwards. As you get stronger and more accustomed to standing, you may find that you can begin to stand for short periods using only one hand… and then no hands. This may take some time to achieve but trying to let go may help your trunk muscles to strengthen. Put a pillow on the table in front of you if you are frightened of toppling forwards. If you do topple, then use your arms to help push yourself back into the upright position (or ask for help if you need to).

Exercising the trunk – strength and balance

These exercises below are designed to increase the strength of your trunk and arms and improve your balance. You can progress the number of times you do these as you feel able, as time goes by. If you can do one of the exercise stages easily, then try the next set of exercises.
Stage 1 - holding on with 2 hands

1. Brace your shoulders back, head up, pull your tummy and bottom in as much as possible and hold for a slow count of 3. Relax.
2. Lean forwards slowly then lean backwards. Only go as far as is comfortable.
3. Lean slowly to your left, then come up straight to the middle; then lean slowly to your right and back to the middle again.
4. Twist your head and body from the waist to look over your left shoulder. Come back to the middle then turn to look over your right shoulder.
5. Try and move your weight from one leg to another by moving your hips from side to side.

Stage 2 – letting go with one or both hands

1. Stand up straight, tuck your tummy and bottom in as much as possible. Hold on with one hand, lift the other arm slowly up in the air as high as possible then bring it to hold on to the rail. Repeat with the other arm.
2. Stand up straight, lift both arms up to shoulder height keeping the elbows straight.
3. Using only one hand to hold on or no hands at all lean forwards slowly as far as you can go and then backwards.
4. Twist at the waist and look over one shoulder then twist to look over the other shoulder.
5. Lean sideways slowly then come up and lean to the other side.
6. Hold one or both arms straight out in front of you and, pretending your index finger is a pencil, draw small circles in the air.
7. Take the arm(s) out to the side, repeat the arm circling exercise as above.
8. With your right arm, lean forwards slightly to touch the front of the table on the left side. Do the same thing with the left arm but touch the right side of the table.

**Stage 3 – working more strongly in the frame**

Only do these exercises if you feel safe standing in the frame without holding on.

1. Using a walking stick (or a small weight in each hand) lift both arms as high in the air as possible.
2. Lift the walking stick or weights to shoulder level and twist to the right and left.
3. Lift the walking stick or weights to shoulder level and lean forwards slowly, straighten up and then lean backwards.
4. Whilst standing, try throwing and catching a ball in the air.

**Stretches in standing**

Standing upright can provide an excellent position for stretching some of the muscles in the leg. To increase the stretch on these muscles, try the following:

1. Place a pillow on the table. Lean as far forward over the pillow as possible to stretch the muscles down the back of the leg.
2. Hold on with both hands and lean gently backwards as far you can comfortably go. This will stretch the muscles at the front of your hip.

If possible, hold these positions for a few minutes each time you stand. Gradually increase the time spent stretching if possible.
Diary entries

After using the frame, please complete the diary that you have been provided with to record the following:

- Date
- Length of stand in minutes
- Time of day stand took place (morning, afternoon, evening)
- Any reasons for not standing
- Any change in your condition
- Any change in your medication
Safety issues

There are very few risks associated with using a standing frame if you follow the instructions provided by your physiotherapist, the DVD’s and this booklet. However, please be aware of the following potential hazards when using the frame:

Check the frame before each stand

- Ensure that the structure of the frame is sound
- Ensure that the stitching on the straps is secure

Person using the frame

- Do not stand if you feel very tired or are unwell
- Sit down if you begin to feel faint or light headed
- Make sure you keep cool as heat can make you tired

Standing assistant

- Always keep the curves in your spine when assisting the person to stand
- Face the way you are moving, do not twist
- Push the frame rather than pull it into position
- Ensure that the hip strap is positioned across the person’s bottom
- Ensure that all straps are done up and ‘locked’ by placing the end of the strap through the loop
- Keep the wheelchair in the frame with the brakes on

The environment

- Leave space around the frame for easy access
- Make sure there is adequate light in the room
- Ensure that pets or children do not play with the frame
Risks and Adverse events
What are they and who do I contact?
This section describes the possible risks and adverse events associated with using a standing frame and what to do if they occur. Be reassured, however, that standing frames are used by physiotherapists regularly in their work and there are very few risks associated with them.

1. Pain or discomfort
Some people experience mild discomfort when they first begin standing such as muscle stiffness, back ache or a stretched feeling in the leg muscles. These are normal and should pass fairly quickly. If these continue for more than a few days please do not continue to use the frame and contact your physiotherapist as soon as possible.

2. Falling out of the frame
As long as the hip strap is positioned correctly, it should be impossible to fall out of the frame. Please ensure that the straps are correctly positioned.

3. Increase in spasms
Occasionally people find that standing temporarily increases spasms. This usually disappears after the first few days of using the frame. Moving slowly and gently often helps to minimise or prevent these spasms.

4. Back pain (standing assistant)
It is important that the standing assistant only gives minimal help to the person standing and that they apply correct moving and handling principles at all times: keep the curve in the lumbar spine as you move, face the direction of movement, do not lift and twist and push the frame rather than pull it into position. The physiotherapist will check that you are doing this during her home visit.

If you have a problem please contact: ....................
Caring for the frame

General Conditions
The standing frame provided to you remains the property of the NHS and is loaned to you on the following conditions.

1. The equipment is for your use only and must not be used by anyone else or for any purpose other than for which it was provided.

2. The equipment must not be altered or any attachments fitted.

3. The equipment must be kept clean, in good working order and protected from damage at all times. Wooden surfaces can be cleaned with a damp cloth or antibacterial disinfectant. Sheepskin covers can be machine washed on a gentle programme.

4. It is the responsibility of the user/carer to ensure mechanical faults with the standing frame are reported to the physiotherapy department as soon as detected.

5. The equipment must be returned or given up for repairs or maintenance work whenever we request.

6. The equipment must not be disposed of in any way or to anyone other than the NHS. If the equipment is no longer required please contact the physiotherapy department to arrange for collection.

7. You must let the physiotherapy department know immediately if:
   - You change your address or telephone number
   - The equipment is lost or damaged
   - You no longer require the equipment, for whatever reason.
FAQ

For the person using the frame:

*How often can I use the frame?*
We have asked that you use the frame for 30 minutes, three times a week. This is because other studies have shown that people need to stand for this length of time for the intervention to be effective.

*What happens if I cannot stand for that long?*
From our experience, we know that it can take a few weeks to get used to standing for long periods. When you first begin, stand for as long as you can. You may find that this is only a few minutes initially. As the days and weeks go by you will probably find that you can stand for longer periods.

*Can I stand for longer if I want to?*
Yes, stand for as long and as often as is comfortable for you but make sure you record the frequency and length of each stand in your diary.

*What should I do if standing causes pain?*
Initially people often experience mild discomfort in their leg muscles or back as a result of standing. This should wear off after a few hours and improve as your body gets used to the fully upright position. You could take an over the counter pain relief such as Paracetamol or Ibuprofen to relieve the pain. If the problem continues, stop using the frame and contact your physiotherapist.

*What happens if I go on holiday or into respite care?*
You probably won’t be able to take the frame with you so continue with the standing programme once you return home. Remember though, it may take a day or two for you to get back into standing regularly again.
What do I do with the frame when it’s not in use?
It is up to you where you keep the frame. Many people store it in a corner of the room. The frame is bulky but it should slide easily across most surfaces so it should be easy to move into position ready for standing.

Can I do activities other than exercise when I am standing?
Yes – use the frame as you wish. For example, you can stand and watch the television, read your book or use your computer on the table. An upturned cardboard box placed on the table will help to get your book or computer in the right position. In fact, you can use the table for any activity you wish, even the washing up!

For the standing assistant:

What do I do if the person with MS doesn’t want to use the frame?
Try and find out from them what the problem is – it may be they are feeling tired or unwell or they may feel unsafe in the frame. If the problem is related to the use of the frame it may be best to contact the physiotherapist who will check how you are using the frame.

What do I do if the person is suddenly very heavy to lift up into standing one day?
Do not lift the person into a standing position, they should always be doing most of the work. If you begin to help someone into a standing position and you feel that they are very heavy, stop the lift and ask them to sit down in their wheelchair. You could always try again later. There are many things which can make someone with MS feel tired. These include obvious things like an infection but also other things such as following a hot bath or shower or a hot meal or drink, their ‘low time’ of the day or when
some medications are working at their maximum. If the person is too hot, try placing a cold, damp flannel on the back of their neck for a few minutes before trying again. If their tiredness is related to the time of day or their medication, try again at a different time. Do not, however, take risks with your own health – take care of your back at all times.

**Can I leave the room when the person is in the frame?**
As long as they are standing securely and the straps are tight and in a good position, you can leave the room for short periods. Always leave the wheelchair behind the person, in the frame, with the brakes on in case they need to sit down quickly. Having a call system or leaving them with a whistle or bell can be helpful in case they need you suddenly.

**How tight should the straps be?**
The knee strap should be pulled as tight as possible to stop the knees buckling. Once that has been placed in position, just below the knee caps, there should be no reason to move it. The ankle strap should be tight enough to stop the feet suddenly moving backwards. When the person first stands up, tighten the hip strap behind their buttocks as much as possible. You may find, however, that it can be tightened again after they have been standing for a few minutes, as the hips straighten.