

balance

What it's all about.

BC Association for Individualized Technology and Supports for People with Disabilities

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Help Us Manage PROP Supplies and Spending

by Walt Lawrence



As a long-time user of the Provincial Respiratory Outreach Program (PROP) services, I have

been so pleased with the quality of service, equipment, care and supplies. We truly have a great client-centered, leading-edge program.

A few years ago, I was pleased to be elected as a member of the PROP Board of Directors. We have the responsibility to review the operations and finances of the program. It has come to the Board's attention that clients' supplies usage is escalating and these costs were forecast to be well over budget for this year.

Managing PROP's spending, while meeting client's needs, is always a challenging balance. PROP staff will be reviewing internal policies and procedures, but PROP needs your help to see how we can reduce spending in this area.

Please consider these questions about your own use of supplies:

- Could you be more efficient in how you use your supplies?
- Are you following best practices in cleaning and caring for the equipment/supplies which can reduce the need for replacements?

- Could you plan ahead and order a few months' supplies at once to reduce shipping costs?
- PROP is way over-budget on masks. Are there ways you can reduce the number of masks you order?
- Do you see things that PROP could do differently to reduce supplies' costs?

Our budget is "locked in" for the next few years, so we are asking PROP clients to help us control costs within your program. As we mention above, for example, ordering your supplies every 3 months is one thing you can do to help reduce shipping costs.

From time to time, our respiratory therapists will be reviewing your supply needs with you and, at least annually, we plan to provide you with an account of your expenditures of supplies. We'll work with you during this review to identify possible ways to cut costs.

We have a goal to reduce our spending on supplies in 2014. Please help us to reach our goal!

We invite your comments at prop@bcits.org on how we can be more efficient in our supply use. Thank you for your thoughts and for helping us improve PROP. ●

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Smart Phone Apps | by Samiko Guest

In the last edition of *BALANCE*, I looked at some voice assistant apps for smart phones. I'd like to continue providing apps tips and reviews to readers in future editions.

WeMo Switch

If you are able to operate an iPhone or an iPad and its apps, you could use the **WeMo Switch Module** to turn on/off your house appliances, such as an electric fan or a plug-in lamp.

You plug your appliances into the WeMo switch, then use your iPhone or iPad like a remote to turn on/off the appliances using WiFi.

Before purchasing a WeMo Switch Module, please make sure you have the following:

- an iPhone with iOS5 or higher (iPhone 4/4s, iPhone 5) or any iPad
- a WiFi Network in your home environment. Your Apple device must be connected to WiFi to operate the WeMo switch.
- the WeMo app. Download is free from the Apple App Store

Set up is quite straightforward. First, download the WeMo app from the Apple App Store, onto your iPhone or iPad. Second, plug your newly

purchased WeMo Switch Module into a power outlet and plug your house appliance into the Module.

Finally, open the WeMo app and follow the on-screen instructions to connect the Module to your home WiFi network and complete the set-up.

You can add more than one Module to your WeMo app to control several house appliances. Each WeMo Module costs \$49.95. You can find them at Home Depot, Apple computer stores, and other outlets. You can also buy them online at <http://www.belkin.com/us/p/F7C027fcAPL>.

Dragon Dictation

If you currently use an iOS device (iPhone, iPad or MiniPad) and find it difficult using the on-screen keyboard to type emails or texts, this app could be great for you. The **Dragon Dictation** app converts your speech into text.

Although this app can eliminate the use of the on-screen keyboard, it is not completely hands-free. You need to access some buttons in order to record, send out the email or text, or select the recipient from your contact list.

To use Dragon Dictation, you need the following:

- an iOS device with iOS 4.0 or better (iPhone 2G, 3G, 3GS, 4, 4GS or any iPad)

- a connection to the Internet, either by WiFi or a data plan

You can download the Dragon Dictation app from the iTunes App Store for free. The app will learn your voice over time and you can record up to one minute at a time.

There is a setting option that allows you to stop recording either manually or automatically. This app is quite intuitive and requires minimal training to use.

Free Audiobooks

A lot of our clients with an iPhone or iPad enjoy using an e-book reader app. However, clients with limited mobility have said it can become tiresome turning the digital page each time a page is completed. Also, each e-book is purchased separately, so a large collection of e-books can be costly.

Free Audiobooks is an app for listening to free public domain books. This app costs only \$0.99 and includes 4,728 classic novels made into audiobooks!

Once you download the audiobook files you want and set up your library lists, the operation of this app is simple. The interface screen looks great and is easy to navigate. All you need is the Free Audiobooks app and an iOS device (iPhone, iPod touch, iPad) with iOS 5.1 or higher.

If you know good, useful apps and would like to share the knowledge, please let us know. We may be able to introduce the app in an edition of *BALANCE*. ●



Farewell

I would like to tell Balance readers and PROP clients that I am retiring at the end of March 2014.

It has been a great pleasure for me working for BCITS within the PROP division and I am going to miss what I do.

Over the years, I've come to know a lot of you and the lessons that you have taught me are indelibly inscribed on my mind. Your unfailing optimism, your joy in life and your kindness to everyone, I will never forget.

You allowed me to be a small part of your lives and for that I thank you. I have been very proud to work in such a great program where we are allowed to give back to our clients and the community that they live in.

You have made me realize that, as I develop the aches and pains that come with getting older, they are irrelevant compared to what I see you living with on a day-to-day to basis—with a smile on your face and a good word for everyone. You have taught me that life is to be lived and not to be squandered and, whatever comes your way, you deal with in a positive manner and with humour.

The other thing I've learned from you is humility—to accept what you are and not to think you're indispensable. As the poem says, "put your hand in a bucket of water and then pull it out, the



You have taught me that life is to be lived and not to be squandered and, whatever comes your way, you deal with in a positive manner and with humour.

hole that is left behind is how indispensable you are."

Thank you for letting me into your homes, and sharing your stories and laughter with me. And thank you for just being yourself; it is a present that I will always treasure.

I hope that over the years I have helped you in whatever way I could and I leave you in good hands. Your team now is younger, with better ideas and with the energy that I no longer have and that you require.

Treat them well, the way that you have treated me—I know you will.

I will miss all of you, but I'll never forget what I've learned from you. You know the saying, "Every cloud has a silver lining." You are that lining.

Regards,
Gillian Harney RRT
Manager, Respiratory Services

The Sunny Side of BCITS

Every summer, with the help of Canada Summer Jobs, BCITS employs a student transitioning from their first to second year of the Biomedical Engineering Technology program at BCIT.

This summer, we were extremely lucky to have Sunny Chang join our talented team of Biomedical Engineering Technologists.

With supervision of the BCITS biomed team, Sunny was able to perform routine maintenance on all PROP and TIL equipment, visit clients for TIL repairs, and perform other duties for the BCITS team.

"... it has been my utmost pleasure being given an opportunity to work at BCITS and applying what I have learned to the work experience. The skills that I have developed with BCITS will undoubtedly be transferred to my future career." Sunny Chang

One of the special projects Sunny was able to work on was the Technology for Independent Living display, shown in the previous *BALANCE* edition. With the help of the BCITS biomed team, Sunny was able to transform the TIL display from a thin plastic board into a beautifully designed oak-cased display.

We would like to thank Sunny for the dedication and positive attitude he displayed at BCITS this summer. And we wish him all the best as he continues the Biomedical Engineering Technology program. ●

Breathe Better by Improving your Chest Wall Flexibility

by Kim Hall, Physiotherapist

Chest wall flexibility? What's that? Your chest wall is cylindrical, surrounds your lungs and is made up of lots of muscles, bones and joints.

In front, you have your sternum or chest bone and, in back, your thoracic spine which is made up of 12 bones stacked on top of each other. Surrounding each side are 12 ribs which move up and down like bucket handles in a healthy, flexible chest. Each rib attaches to the spine at the back and to the chest bone in the front.

In between each set of ribs are the intercostal muscles. At the bottom of the cylinder, is the diaphragm muscle and at the top are the scalene muscles.

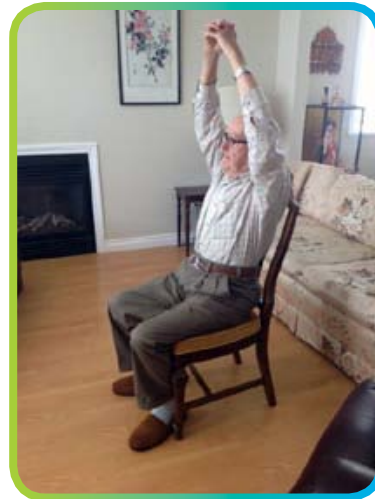
Chest wall flexibility is the amount of movement your ribs, chest bone, spine and muscles permit on each in-breath and out-breath.

With bed rest, frequent hospitalizations or disorders that affect your ability to move, your joints become stiff. Scar tissue may also form after surgeries that will affect the rib joints in the front and back, and down the spine.

Just like any other part of the body, flexibility can be improved with stretching exercises. In order to get air into all the parts of your lungs and allow the most gas exchange to occur, your chest wall needs to move. This can help prevent shortness of breath, pneumonia and other breathing complications.

Here are four simple exercises you can do yourself or with someone's help to improve your chest wall flexibility.

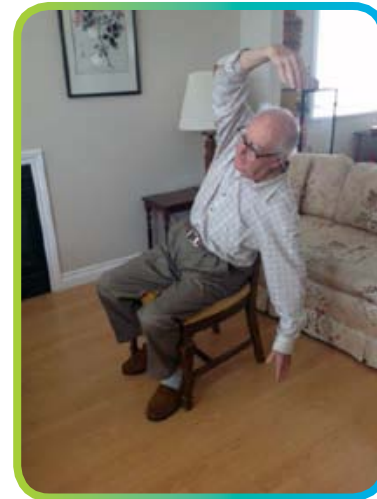
REACHING UP WITH DEEP BREATHS



Sitting or lying down, clasp your hands together and reach above your head as high as you can, while taking a deep breath in. Think about a rope attached to your chest bone, pulling it up toward the ceiling. Hold for 2 seconds and then slowly lower your arms, while exhaling. Repeat 5 times.

If you are on a ventilator, time the reach above your head with the ventilator inhale and lower your arms during the ventilator exhale. If you cannot move your arms by yourself, have someone lift them for you in a pain-free range (this also applies to exercises 2 and 3).

SIDE BEND WITH ARM OVERHEAD



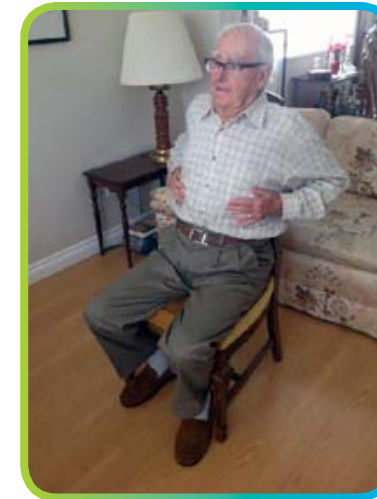
In a sitting posture, reach down to one side and try to touch the floor with your hand. Reach the opposite arm over your head. You should feel a big stretch under the arm that is over your head.

Think about trying to push your ribs out as far as they will go. Take 2 deep inhales and exhales in this position.

Repeat on the other side.

Perform 3 times on each side.

BUCKET HANDLE LIFTS (SEATED OR LYING DOWN)



Sitting or lying down, place your hands over the sides of your lower ribs. Take a deep breath in and concentrate on relaxing your neck and pushing your ribs into your hands.

Hold for 2 seconds. Repeat 5 times.

You should feel a movement like bucket handles being raised a few centimetres off a bucket.

Remember, all these exercises should be pain free. You should consult a therapist if you have any questions or want to learn more about how to improve your chest wall flexibility and breathing.

SEATED GENTLE SPINAL TWIST



While sitting, cross your arms in front of your chest. Turn your body to the right as much as you can, until you feel a stretch or pull in your back.

Hold for 2 seconds. Repeat on the left side.

Perform 5 times on each side.

Kim Hall is Clinical Leader of Physical Therapists at Physio2U Mobile Physiotherapists. To learn more about the services her team provides, visit www.Physio2U.ca.

Share Your Gadgets

by Simon Cox

Leonardo Da Vinci said, "Simplicity is the ultimate sophistication."

Whether you are a client of TIL or PROP, we know that many of you have solutions to daily living problems of living with a disability. Some solutions may seem simple, but sometimes the simplest solutions are the most effective and clever. If it works for you, it may work for others.

I would love to capture as many of your marvellous solutions or tips as possible. If we receive enough, we will dedicate a whole *BALANCE* edition to them. So I am asking you to submit your ideas to info@bcits.org with the subject line "TIPS."

Here's an example. One of our clients came up with the ingenious idea of placing a sponge in the reservoir of his humidifier. When he's travelling, this helps with spillage. Another client is a great organizer who uses a memory management scheme to find things in her home. Something I could use!

So, please send me your tips—no tip is too small. We will have a draw and the lucky winner will receive \$50 in gasoline cards.

Today's Tip

Did you know that placing your iPod or similar device in a bowl (empty, of course) will amplify the volume due to its concave shape? ●

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Consider Renting a Van for Local Travel

by Barbara Schober

As the monsoon season is once again upon us in Vancouver, wheelchair users may be forgiven for wanting nothing more than to huddle indoors next to a space heater and count off the days until spring.

If you're also vent-dependent, chances are good that you're already bundling up to your eyes and dreading the imminent flu season. Not exactly the greatest incentive to make long trips by public transport.

While Vancouver is, for the most part, a fantastic city for accessibility, the sheer size of the Greater Vancouver area makes it very hard to get around in a wheelchair. This is especially true for special outings to destinations like Whistler, Vancouver Island or the Okanagan which most people would consider "nearby." Unless, of course, they couldn't use regular transportation or leave home without enough gear to outfit a small safari expedition.

What, then, are the options? Wheelchair taxis are now quite abundant,



but they are seldom spacious enough for power chairs equipped with vent trays and users who can't duck their head down to fit through a low entrance, no matter how many times an anxious taxi driver insists they can. HandyDART buses are nice and roomy, but they only work well for scheduled appointments within the allowable zones.

Wheelchair vans are the obvious ideal solution for navigating our beautiful province, but the cost of a converted van is beyond the means of many people. Renting a wheelchair van, however, may be a feasible option.

I have several side-entry ramp vans now available for rent or sale. Heaters and windshield wipers ready!

For information, please contact Barb at vanscape@telus.net or 604-597-3336. or visit <http://www.bcwheelchairvans.com>.



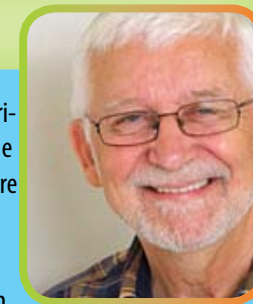
Meet Wendy

Wendy Lawrence is excited to have the opportunity to join forces with the PROP team.

Wendy has a University of British Columbia Bachelor of Science in Nursing, with a Paediatric Intensive Care Unit (PICU) certificate from the British Columbia Institute of Technology. Her work history includes experience at BC Children's Hospital intensive care unit, Langara College; Vancouver Community Health; and, the Acute Spinal Cord Injury Unit.

Wendy is looking forward to working in an environment that is consumer driven. "I hope to share my knowledge, while learning from the experiences of the clients."

Help Us Fulfill Our Vision



BCITS, proud home of PROP and TIL, is a registered non-profit and charitable organization. The funds to operate these programs come from the Ministry of Health, through the Vancouver Coastal Health region. We are very grateful for this generous support.

However, this funding does not cover the costs to provide equipment to TIL clients. For example, a special telephone for a person with a high level disability can cost as much as \$1000 and an automatic door opener can cost \$3000.

We provide many devices like these to adults—at no cost—to fulfill our vision of people living in the community as independently as possible.

You can help us continue this work through your donation. Any contribution large or small will be gratefully accepted. **100% of your donation will go toward equipment and assistive devices.**

Thank you, Simon Cox, BCITS Executive Director
 Charitable Registration Number 807477070RR0001

Yes, I would like to support TIL's equipment program.

- I enclose a cheque for \$ _____.
- I will make a donation by credit card through CanadaHelps.org. [Donate in minutes by clicking on the CanadaHelps button on our home page at www.bcits.org.]
- I would like to donate directly by VISA. I will call Clara Chalifour at 604-326-0175.

Please be sure to fill in all your contact details, so we can send your tax receipt (for donations of \$10 or more).

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY & PROVINCE _____

POSTAL CODE _____

PHONE _____

EMAIL _____

Please return this form to: BCITS, #103-366 E. Kent Ave S., Vancouver, BC V5X 4N6

Share Your Stories About People Who Care



If you are a client with a personal care attendant or an attendant who works with a PROP/TIL client, we want to hear your story.

Personal care attendant not only provide care and support to clients, they also have their own interesting lives and stories.

In 2014, BCITS wishes to acknowledge and honour the great people behind the titles of care worker, personal care attendant and others. Maybe it is a family member or a grocery that delivers to your home or a next door neighbour or someone in a support group that has helped you in some way.

Who are the people that make a difference in your life and why?

Our goal is to collect as many stories as we can and publish them throughout the year in BALANCE.

Your stories can be short or long. The only "rule" is to recognize people in our day-to-day lives that make a difference.

We hope you'll share your stories with us and our BALANCE readers.

Send Your Story To

Email: prop@bcits.org
 Fax: 604-326-0176
 Mail: 103-366 East Kent Ave South,
 Vancouver BC, V5X 4N6

For more information on the story project, please call the office at 1-866-326-1245.

Yes, I Accept Your Invitation To Join BCITS



The BC Association for Individualized Technology and Supports for People with Disabilities (BCITS)
Home of Provincial Respiratory Outreach Program (PROP) & Technology for Independent Living (TIL)

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/Prov: _____ Postal Code: _____

Telephone: _____ Email: _____

Please Check One

- Membership for registered BCITS clients**
Please mail completed form to BCITS (the cost of postage constitutes your membership fee)
- Non-client membership fee**
Please mail completed form along with \$20.00 annual membership fee payable to BCITS.

Please mail this form along with any applicable membership fees to BCITS - The Home Of PROP and TIL, #103-366 E. Kent Ave S., Vancouver, BC V5X 4N6

Philippe Jannin Fund Helps To "Open Doors"

BY SIMON COX On September 19th, the Kinsmen Foundation held their 1st annual Kin Classic golf tournament. Some of the funds raised will go towards the purchase of automatic door openers for clients of the Technology for Independent Living program (TIL). Kinsmen have always been a great supporter of TIL and we are indebted to them for their generosity.

Funding for the Open Doors Project comes from many sources. We particularly wish to thank Beate Breurs for her and her family's contribution of \$10,000 towards the Philippe Jannin Fund which was established to support the door opener program.

Also many thanks to Frank Nose and Stanley Black & Decker Canada Corporation for their support at the tournament and continued support of the Open Doors Project. The BC Rehab Foundation has also been very generous over the years. Last year, they donated \$7500 to support this important project.

Clients wishing to apply for a door opener can access our website at <http://bcits.org/becomeclient.htm> and then click on the link "For door opener requests, please contact."

Please note there are eligibility requirements and there may be a waiting period. ●



L to R: Simon Cox, Beate Breurs and Frank Nose