



Trailing, Landmarks, Squaring Off, and Protection

Trailing

Trailing provides an individual a way to walk independently by following a wall or handrail. Prior to encouraging anyone to trail, please first preview the route to be sure that it is obstacle free and that the trailing surface is comfortable and safe.

1. Greet the individual by name, tell the person your name and the destination. Sighted guide or Voice guide the individual to the start of the trailing route.

2. Encourage the individual to reach out to the trailing surface.

3. When trailing along a handrail the individual should lightly grip the rail by wrapping fingers around it.

4. When trailing along a wall, the individual may hold hands and arms in one of three positions depending upon his preference and ability.



Trailing along a railing.



a. Side of Hand

With the side of the hand (pinky finger and the side of the palm against the wall), with all fingers bent in toward the palm, so that the traveler does not catch fingernails on anything.

b. Back of Hand

With the back of the hand against the wall, fingers bent in toward the palm, so that the traveler's fingernails do not catch on anything.

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c. Palm of Hand

With palm open and against the wall. Please remember that the palm is the most sensitive part of the hand and that when trailing in this position, fingers cannot be easily protected.

5. Encourage the individual to hold the trailing arm out at waist level and extended as forward as possible along the trailing surface to provide forward protection.

6. Encourage the individual to walk facing forward so that the body is parallel to the trailing surface.

7. Encourage the individual to stand or walk as upright as possible for safety when trailing. See the *Protection* section below.



Landmarks

Landmarks can be used to indicate to the individual where to change direction or turn along a specific route.

Tactile landmarks can be fixed objects already located in the environment or those strategically placed along routes where needed. Landmarks must not change. Some examples are doors, windows, fire hydrants, and vending machines.

Sounds and smells can also be used as landmarks. Some examples are the sound of running water, radio, wind chimes, and the hum of a soda machine. Smells from the kitchen or flowers can help someone to realize where they are.

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Squaring Off



Squaring Off is a technique that can be used in conjunction with trailing to help a person maintain a straight line of travel when turning along a route or when crossing a hallway.

1. The individual places his back against that he was trailing.
2. To maintain safety while crossing free space, encourage the individual to extend hands and arms out in front when crossing the space to protect the head and torso when walking. See **Protection** below.

Protection

Protective Techniques should be used when walking through open space or areas with head and/or waist level hazards. Individuals should be monitored for safety at all times when crossing open space. The techniques are listed below in order of most to least protection when used correctly.



Upper Protective Technique

One hand and arm diagonally in front of the head and neck area, with palm facing out, away from the body.

Lower Protective Technique

One hand and arm diagonally in front of the waist and lower, with palm facing in, toward the body.

Most protection is offered when Upper and Lower Protective Techniques are used at the same time.

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Variations of Protective Techniques

1. Both Hands Together
With both hands and arms outstretched, with hands clasped together.



2. Both Hands Extended
With both hands and arms outstretched, palms facing out, fingers extended at head/neck level.



3. Object in Hands
Holding onto an object for protection so that arms stay in front of the body.



4. Hat with Long Brim
Wearing a hat with a long brim such as a baseball cap or visor, offers some limited protection if safe use of hands and arms is limited. The long brim will bump into a wall before the person does and offers some limited protection.

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Please see also the following MCB/DDS Partnership Handouts:

- Orientation and Mobility
- Standard Sighted Guide
- Voice Guiding