



## 3 steps to better patient care.

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A friend of mine gave me some really good advice whilst hiking one day. I had just packed up camp loaded my backpack and was keen to head off down the track. In fact, I was in a hurry.

She said the most important thing to do before going any further was to take three steps and turn around.

"It should become a habit. Every time". Three steps. Turn around. Look.

It gives you the opportunity to find anything you have forgotten or left lying around or anything that has fallen loose.... stuff that you are going to totally miss in your hurry to move on. Tent pegs. Food bags. Map. Coffee cup. Stuff like that.

Three steps to give you some distance. And then a few moments to scan the environment.

Sure enough...sitting over there on that flat rock, was my spork.

It's pretty good advice for us nurses too.

How many times have you been focused on a specific task with one of your patients, and then hurried off to do something else, only to have to come back 5 minutes later because something else needs your attention. Something you could have easily taken care of the first time if you had been paying attention.

You could call it situational awareness.

Or clustering your care.

Or you could just make a habit of taking 3 steps, turning around and looking.

Ask them if there is anything else you can do for them.

And check:

- Does the patient look OK?
- Is the IV bag about to run through?
- Is the IV line secure?
- Did you leave your pen on the bed?
- Is your patient comfortable (analgesia, positioning)?
- Is their catheter bag full?
- Have you left anything at the bedside (medications, rubbish etc.)?
- Are the bed sides up (if they need to be)?
- Is the bed at the ideal height for the patient?
- Does your patient have their call-bell?
- Does their monitor need attention?
- Have you forgotten your spork?

You get the idea.

It sounds so self-evident. But the problem is...if you don't try and make it a specific habit and you are busy...oh hang on, I seem to have lost my pen.

Get in the habit of taking 3 steps back, turning around, and making a quick scan. Both checking for anything left undone, and making a pre-emptive assessment for things that might need doing.



Ian Miller