

# Lying Position

When supporting an adult or teenager with a physical disability and complex positioning needs who is not able to tell you how they are feeling, it can be difficult to figure out how to help them, and to know if you should refer to a health professional.

When positioning is being assessed, safety should always be a primary consideration. Important safety questions to address are:

- Are rails present? If so, are they up? Is padding required?
- Are there any gaps or spaces that the body may become stuck between?

If gaps exist they must be reviewed URGENTLY - it is very dangerous for a person with a physical disability who cannot move independently, or control their movements, to become stuck in a gap.

Additional questions to consider:

- Is there a Sleep Positioning Plan or Night Time Positioning Plan in place?
- If no plan is in place, is one needed?
- Is additional guidance needed to understand positioning requirements? If so, is a consultation with a therapy team scheduled?
- If a plan is in place, is it being reviewed at least once per year to check that it is still meets all needs?



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## My Details

Full name

Summary notes

Checklist completed by

Date

## Lying Position cont.

The following checklist can assist you to answer your questions.

Question	If answering	Recommended action
<b>General comfort</b>		
<p>Is pain or discomfort evident?</p> <p>Is the individual crying out in an unusual manner?</p> <p>Are there general signs of stress?</p> <p>Is there a change in facial colour – red, pale?</p> <p>Do the eyes appear distressed?</p> <p>Is breathing laboured or distressed?</p> <p>Do they have altered muscle tone, spasms, increased or decreased movements (compared to normal)?</p>	<p><b>Yes</b> (to any of these points)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Signs must not be ignored – find the cause and treat it.</li> <li>• Consult a GP, physiotherapist and occupational therapist.</li> </ul>
<b>Pressure</b>		
<p>Is the body free of red marks?</p> <p><i>NB: Red marks indicate increased pressure on the body. If this is not reviewed a pressure injury may occur, causing a long period of pain, discomfort and ill health.</i></p>	<p><b>No</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Signs must not be ignored – find the cause and treat it.</li> <li>• Consult a GP, physiotherapist and occupational therapist.</li> <li>• If a pressure area has occurred, contact a GP or nurse immediately</li> </ul>
<b>Clothing and extra materials</b>		
<p>Is clothing sitting comfortably on the body, pulled through, with no bunching?</p> <p>Are any extra materials positioned correctly?</p> <p>Is the therapy team aware of the extra materials? Are the materials indicated on any sleep or positioning plans that are in place?</p> <p><i>NB: It is strongly recommended that thick incontinence materials NOT be used as they can prevent some prescribed materials from working properly and/or increase the risk of pressure injury. There are incontinence sheets that work well and can be used instead of thicker materials.</i></p>	<p><b>No</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adjust clothing to sit comfortably on the body, with no bunching</li> <li>• Position any extra materials correctly</li> <li>• Inform the therapy team of any extra materials</li> <li>• Request a review of sleep or positioning plans if necessary</li> </ul>

## Lying Position cont.

Question	If answering	Recommended action
<b>Support equipment</b>		
<p>Is support equipment positioned as shown on a sleep or positioning plan?</p> <p>Is the plan relating to equipment clear?</p> <p>Are all recommendations of the plan understood?</p>	<b>No</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reposition equipment as shown in sleep or positioning plans</li> <li>• Request a review of sleep or positioning plans if necessary</li> <li>• Request a review from the therapy team and training as required</li> </ul>

### Temperature

<p>Is temperature being managed independently?</p> <p>Are blankets, sheets and bedding appropriate for the weather?</p> <p>Is heating or cooling set at a suitable temperature?</p>	<b>No</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adjust heating, cooling or bedding as required</li> <li>• Re-check general comfort following changes to heating, cooling or bedding</li> <li>• Report ongoing issues relating to temperature to the therapy team</li> </ul>
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*NB: When assessing temperature, consider heat, cold, sweating and fluctuations in temperature.*

### Mattress

<p>Is the mattress positioned correctly?</p> <p>Is the foam still appropriate, i.e. not bottomed out?</p> <p>Is the mattress regularly turned?</p> <p>Is the mattress air at a correct setting?</p> <p>Is the mattress cleaned regularly?</p>	<b>No</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reposition the mattress and turn as necessary, reset air and ensure regular cleaning takes place</li> <li>• Report ongoing mattress issues to the therapy team</li> </ul>
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### Bed

<p>Is bed in good working order?</p> <p>Are head-of-bed raise and knee break functions working?</p> <p>Is individual's positioning correct to make use of bed's functions?</p> <p>Does their bottom align with the position that the bed raises?</p> <p>Do their knees align with the position that the knee break of the bed raises?</p>	<b>No</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reposition individual to be aligned with bed functions</li> <li>• Report problems with bed function to the therapy team and/or house supervisor</li> </ul>
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## Lying Position cont.

Question	If answering	Recommended action
<b>Head</b>		
<p>Is head positioning on the pillow correct?</p> <p>Is the person's head positioned close to the middle looking up or slightly forwards if on their back or straight ahead if on their side?</p>	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reposition as required</li> <li>• If unable to reposition, report head positioning problems to the therapy team for review</li> </ul>
<b>Arms</b>		
<p>Are the arms positioned comfortably?</p> <p>If the lying position is on the side, is the lower shoulder pulled through or back with not too much weight on it?</p>	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reposition</li> <li>• If unable to reposition, report to the therapy team for review</li> </ul>
<b>Trunk</b>		
<p>Is the trunk (from shoulders to hips) in the middle or close to this?</p> <p>Are pillows used (if required) to support the person's trunk?</p> <p>If the head of the bed is elevated, is the person's trunk open and tall (i.e. not slumped)?</p>	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reposition</li> <li>• If unable to reposition, report to therapy team for review</li> </ul>
<b>Legs</b>		
<p>If lying position is on the back, are legs symmetrical in positioning?</p> <p>If lying position is on the side, is the upper leg supported by a pillow?</p> <p>If the head of the bed is elevated, is the bottom positioned at the split in the bed?</p>	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reposition as required</li> <li>• If unable to reposition, report leg positioning problems to the therapy team for review</li> </ul>
<b>Feet</b>		
<p>Is there equal distribution under the feet on mattress?</p> <p>If lying position is on the side, is the foot of the upper leg supported?</p>	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reposition as required</li> <li>• If unable to reposition, report foot positioning problems to the therapy team for review</li> </ul>