

Sitting Position

When supporting an adult or teenager with a physical disability and complex positioning needs, and who cannot express how they are feeling, providing assistance and knowing when to consult a health professional can be difficult.



Safety must always be considered.

If postural straps are used, are they attached correctly?

If foot or ankle straps are used, are other postural straps also attached?

Remember that any straps on someone's chair are postural supports and not restraints or transport approved restraints. Transport straps must be used and any additional pieces of equipment such as trays removed and correctly stored during transport. Alternately, a standard chair within a vehicle can be used for transport.

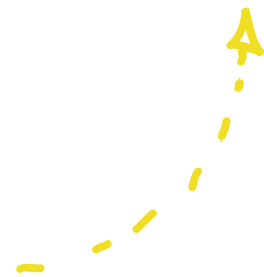
If there is a Transfer Plan, Mealtime Card, Transport Plan or any other plan in place providing recommendations for sitting positions, it is essential that these plans

are followed. It is important to remember that plan recommendations relate to the individual and not their equipment – for example, 'upright' refers to the individual's body being upright, not a chair being in its most upright position. If support is needed to interpret any detail of a plan, consult the individual's planner and allied health team as appropriate.

If there are no plans in place, are they needed?

For additional support around best positioning for an individual, refer to the therapy team for assessment and planning. Plans should be reviewed at least annually to ensure that all the needs of the individual are being met correctly.

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Sitting Position cont.

The following checklist can assist in answering common questions.

Question	If answering	Recommended action
General comfort		
<p>Is there pain or discomfort?</p> <p>Is there any crying out in an unusual manner?</p> <p>Are there signs of general stress?</p> <p>Is the face an altered colour – red or pale?</p> <p>Do the eyes look distressed?</p> <p>Is breathing distressed?</p> <p>Is there altered muscle tone, spasms, increased or decreased movements (compared to normal)?</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes must not be ignored – seek support in establishing the source of discomfort and how to treat it • Consult a GP, physiotherapist and occupational therapist
Pressure		
<p>Are red marks visible anywhere on the body?</p> <p><i>NB: Red marks indicate increased pressure on the body. If this is not reviewed, a pressure injury may occur resulting in pain, discomfort and ill health.</i></p>	<p>No</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Red marks must not be ignored – seek support in establishing the source and best treatment • Consult a GP, physiotherapist and occupational therapist • If a pressure area has already occurred, contact the medical team immediately – GP or nurse
Position compared to plan		
<p>If a positioning plan is in place, does body positioning match the plan?</p> <p><i>NB: Plans should be reviewed regularly</i></p>	<p>No</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reposition per the plan • Re-check general comfort • Contact the therapy team if positioning problems persist

Sitting Position cont.

Question	If answering	Recommended action
Additional devices		
<p>Are additional devices being used as indicated?</p> <p>If there is a spirit level, is this being used correctly?</p> <p>Is tilt or recline being used correctly?</p> <p>Tilt: <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Recline: <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow plan and instructions to set devices as indicated Contact the therapy team if positioning problems persist
Cushions		
<p>Are cushions positioned correctly?</p> <p>Are they in good condition?</p> <p>Do cushions provide even support?</p>	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reposition cushions Report to therapy team if cushions need to be reviewed or replaced
Clothing and extra materials		
<p>Is clothing sitting comfortably, pulled through with no bunching?</p> <p>If there are any extra materials used, are they positioned correctly?</p> <p>Does the therapy team know about extra materials being used?</p> <p>Are these materials indicated on a plan?</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 can increase the risk of pressure injury. There are incontinence sheets that work well and can be used instead of thicker materials.</i></p>	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adjust clothing to sit comfortably with no bunching Position any extra materials correctly Inform the therapy team of any extra materials Request a review of plans if necessary

Sitting Position cont.

Question	If answering	Recommended action
Headrest		
Is the head in line with the headrest? Can the head rest comfortably on the headrest?	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reposition as required • Contact the therapy team if positioning problems persist
Shoulder height		
Are the shoulders in line with the top of cushions?	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reposition as required • Contact the therapy team if positioning problems persist
Lateral supports		
Is there any gap between lateral supports and the arm pit? Is weight equally distributed between each lateral support? If swinging away, do they clip back properly?	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reposition as required • Contact the therapy team if positioning problems persist
Chest strap		
Is the chest strap firm? Does the front strap attach comfortably across the chest? Is the bottom of the chest strap attached firmly to stop the strap moving upwards towards the neck? Are other straps firmly attached to prevent the body slipping?	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reposition as required • Contact the therapy team if positioning problems persist

Sitting Position cont.

Question	If answering	Recommended action
Bottom position		
<p>Is the bottom positioned correctly? Is it all the way back when seated and in the correct contours of seating? Do both legs appear to be sitting equally? Is the pelvic strap on firmly? Can two fingers be placed between the body and strap? Does the pelvic strap hold the body correctly in the seat?</p>	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reposition as required • Contact the therapy team if positioning problems persist
Thigh/knee position		
<p>Is there at least two finger-widths between cushions and the back of the leg? Is there a gap between the end of the pommel and the individual's groin? i.e. ensure there has been no slipping forwards to be pushing hard into the pommel</p>	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reposition as required • Contact the therapy team if positioning problems persist
Tray		
<p>Is the tray being used for its purpose? Is the tray positioned around the stomach comfortably? If the tray is required for postural support at all times, does it have extra attachments for transport? Is the tray clear of wheelchair controls?</p>	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reposition as required • Contact the therapy team if positioning problems persist

Sitting Position cont.

Question	If answering	Recommended action
Feet		
Are footplates in place? Are the feet supported by the footplates? Do the feet sit roughly midline on the footplates? When repositioning the feet, do they move freely and comfortably? If foam supports have been attached, are they in place? Has the footplate been positioned to consider the comfort of feet when bare and all shoes?	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reposition as required• Contact the therapy team if positioning problems persist

My Details

Full name

Checklist completed by

Date

Summary notes