

RELIEVING PRESSURE IN A WHEELCHAIR



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POSITIONING AND PRESSURE SORES

WHAT IS A PRESSURE SORE?

Pressure sores are wounds to the skin and underlying tissue, generally located above bony prominences.

RISK FACTORS

Age, morphology, poor health status, poor nutrition, pain, reduced mobility, history of previous sore, dehydration, incontinence, altered mental status, reduced sensitivity, smoking, a deformed limb, poor hygiene.

WHAT CAN CAUSE PRESSURE SORES?

- ▶ Poor positioning, which can create pressure points;
- ▶ Friction;
- ▶ Transfer technique;
- ▶ Poorly fitted wheel chair;
- ▶ Unrelieved pressure due to maintaining the same immobile position over a long time.

BASIC PRINCIPLES

- ▶ The seat cushion is a therapeutic cushion. Make sure it's placed in the proper direction and that nothing is put on top of it.
- ▶ Remove the sling after transfers.
- ▶ Repositioning is recommended at least once every hour.

AVOIDING PRESSURE SORES

Follow the above advice on positioning, repositioning, and appropriate use of the wheelchair's various components and technical aids for posture.

If you notice redness or sores, contact your doctor or your CLSC worker right away.

If you have any questions about positioning, preventing sores, or any other related subject, contact your Occupational Therapist.

RELIEVING PRESSURE

Repositioning means varying your body position. It is essential to include it in your daily routine.

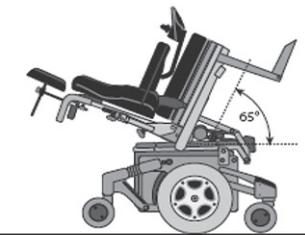
The main objectives of repositioning are to :

- ▶ Avoid pressure sores;
- ▶ Regulate body temperature and humidity while in the chair;
- ▶ Promote better postural alignment;
- ▶ Improve physiological functions (breathing, digestion...).

The technique you use to relieve the pressure on your seat will depend on your physical abilities and on the type of wheelchair you have.

USING THE TILT

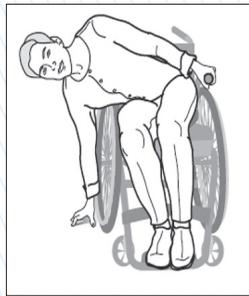
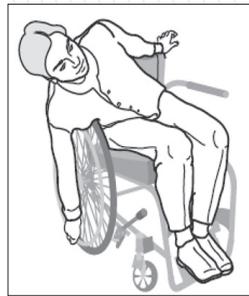
The tilt maintains the angle between the seat and the backrest but varies the angle of the person in relation to the floor. To fully relieve pressure in the chair, it is recommended to tilt the chair at its maximum inclination for at least one minute every hour.



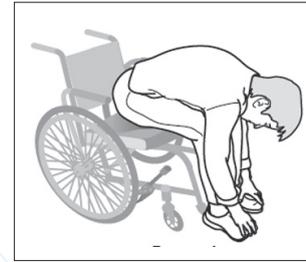
WEIGHT SHIFTING

Shifting your weight from one side to the other will relieve the pressure for one buttock at a time.

Activate the brakes and remove one armrest. Lean one side by holding onto the opposite armrest or the back frame. To fully relieve the pressure, make sure there is no pressure on the buttock. Hold this position for 1 minute every hour. Repeat the exercise on the other side.



If the above technique is too difficult, lean sideways onto a table or a stable object. Activate the brakes and remove one armrest. To fully relieve the pressure, make sure there is no pressure on the buttock. Hold this position for 1 minute every hour. Repeat the exercise on the other side.



Weight transfers forward can be done on your own or with help.

Make sure you turn the front wheels of the chair so that they face forward.



Apply the brakes. Lean forward, trying to touch your chest to your knees. By holding this position, you'll relieve the pressure on the back of your buttocks. Hold the position for 1 minute every hour.

PUSH-UPS

Hold on to your arm rests and lift your buttocks completely off the seat. Hold that position for one minute. This technique can cause shoulder problems. It is recommended that you use it only when you can't use any of the other techniques suggested.



ALTERNATIVE TECHNIQUES FOR WEIGHT SHIFTING

When you're not at home and still want to be able to relieve pressure on your seat, try the following techniques:



Cross one leg over the other while holding your knee. Lean to one side to relieve the pressure on the buttock. Hold the position for 1 minute. Repeat the exercise on the other side.

Cross one leg over the other, bringing your ankle over the knee. Lean forward to relieve the pressure on the back of the buttocks. Hold the position for 1 minute. Repeat the exercise with the other leg.

Lean on a table while talking with your friends. Take lots of time to tie your shoelaces. You'll be leaning forward, relieving pressure on the back of the buttocks.