

Prescriber Seating Guidelines. Also refer to **Seating Pathway** and **Prescriber Guidelines.**

Sitting in the wrong sized armchair can lead to discomfort as well as problems with pressure, postural stability, circulation, respiration, digestion and social interaction as well as difficulty getting in and out of the chair independently and falls.

Check Chair Size

The chair should fit the person who uses it, to ensure maximum contact between all surfaces and the persons back, buttocks, thighs, feet and forearms to spread weight evenly and to provide a firm base and back rest for healthy seated posture.

The basic seating position should ensure that:

- With the person seated in the midline with their feet flat on the floor the seat height should be the same as the measurement from the floor to the back of their knee. The angle at ankles and knees should be approximately 90° and hips slightly more than 90°.
- When seated the pelvis should be level and not rotated or tilted backwards so that the seat is supporting both buttocks and both thighs equally.
- To ensure weight is spread evenly along the length of both thighs the seat should extend to about 2.5cm from back of knees.
- When seated the full length of the person's back should be supported by the backrest.
- When seated in the midline the armrests should support both forearms with elbows at approximately 90°. Shoulders should be supported and be comfortable and level.

Check Chair Shape and Function.

If a chair is too high; feet won't touch the floor so the person tends to slide forward to get their feet on the floor, to gain stability and to reduce pressure on the back of the knees. Sliding forward leads to shear pressure on the buttocks and thighs. The back will no longer reach the backrest and so be unsupported, pelvis may tilt backwards (sacral seating) and weight is then taken through the base of the spine rather than the buttocks and thighs, 32% of skin breakdown occurs on the sacrum and sacral seating is a major cause of this.

An extra cushion on the seat may lead to seat being too high.

If Seat is too low; knees will be higher than the pelvis so thighs are unsupported and weight will be concentrated on the buttocks. The pelvis tends to tilt backwards, leading to sacral seating.

If the seat is too deep; they will either have to sit with an unsupported back leading to sacral seating or with their feet off the floor leading to shear pressure and reduced postural stability.

If armrests are too high or low or the seat too wide; the person will be unable to use the armrests. Unsupported shoulders quickly lead to shoulder and neck pain, with no armrest support the person tends to slump to one side, leading to irregular pressure distribution and shear pressure on the buttocks and thighs.

Armrests which extend to the front edge of the seat are more effective for pushing up to stand.

Sloping back rest ; can lead to the person's bottom sliding forward on the seat leading to falls, slumping to one side, sacral sitting, shear pressure, and wind swept hips. This problem can also arise in a recliner chair in which the seat doesn't move when the backrest reclines.

Use the Seating Pathway overleaf for guidance on seating solutions to correct posture or support postural irregularities to ensure an even weight distribution.