

For More Information:

# POSTURAL CARE

## Protect and Restore Body Shape



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# Introduction

People often assume that body shape distortion is inevitable for people with multiple disabilities, but that is not the case.

If children are routinely placed in or adopt asymmetrical positions that they are unable to move out of, they become uncomfortable and stiff and the body eventually becomes fixed in asymmetric or other destructive postures. This is likely to cause pain, lead to damaged skin integrity, reduce function and limit access to "normal" activities.

Poor postural management therefore has serious consequences for the quality of life and health of the child / young person.

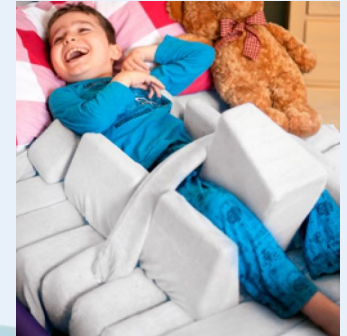
With correct positioning, body shape distortion is preventable and can even be corrected later in life and thus it is of vital importance that body position and shape is taken seriously from the outset.



## Lying

Sleep systems allow for children to maintain accurate posture through the night.

- Improved quality of sleep
- Helps reduce need for surgical intervention
- Improves symmetry
- Improves comfort
- Improve breathing
- Reduces the risk of contractures or changes to body shape



## Additional Accessories

Hand and foot splints can be an essential accessory for maintain correct posture. They can allow for:

- Maintenance of muscle length and range of movement
- Prevent development of future deformities
- Improve positioning & functioning
- Reduce pain and increase stability



# Equipment

## Standing



Standing frames allow for children to take part in activities.

They also help with:

- Bone development
- Digestion
- Circulation & Breathing
- Posture
- Stretching & Positioning
- Skin care (removes of pressure sores)

## Sitting



Postural support in sitting can:

- Provide postural management
- Ensure a safe swallow and to support breathing
- Enhance function and ability to perform tasks
- Support social interaction
- Provide independence
- Allow full access to environment
- Encourage sitting patterns

# What is postural care?

Postural care is about protecting someone's body shape.

People who find it hard to move - for example, those with multiple disabilities—are most at risk of developing body shape distortions. This is because they often sit and lie in limited positions.

If we understand why certain postures are distorting the body, we can correct them. Postural care is about using the right equipment and positioning techniques to help protect and restore body shape.

The earlier the intervention, the better—but it is never too late to start protecting and restoring someone's body shape.



# Why is postural care important?

When a person has an neurological impairment it is important to think about their posture throughout the day and night.

Therapists call this 24-hour postural management.

Postural management aims to:

- Maintain correct posture
- Facilitate mobility
- Facilitate inclusion
- Facilitate communication
- Facilitate feeding
- Provide comfort

## Care for the individual

Taking account of the individual's needs is a vital part of creating and maintaining effective postural care.

The child/ young person and their family should be central to their postural care management with postural care goals co-produced between the child/ young person and their wider MDT team



# Accompaniments to Postural Care

## Physiotherapy



Assessments and advice plays an important role in postural care. This can include active exercise and passive exercise programmes, seating assessments and advice, night time positioning and advice on sleep systems, hydrotherapy and rebound therapy programmes.

Physiotherapists can also provide assessment and advice on the use of standing frames and or-

## Surgery



Surgery is only used in severe cases where spasticity is unable to be managed successfully with medication.



## Medication

Spasticity (high tone) can make it difficult for the person you care for to carry out their postural care programme correctly. Medications such as Baclofen, Clonazepam and Tizanidine can be used to reduce spasticity. Your GP can advise you, if required.



## CPIP

The Cerebral Palsy Integrated Pathway is a follow-up programme for children with Cerebral Palsy or suspected Cerebral Palsy. The programme involves a protocol of physiotherapy assessment and pelvic x-rays. The goal is that every child achieves the best function possible. More information can be given by your physiotherapist.



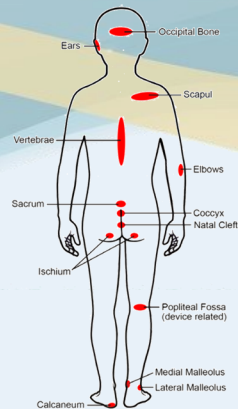
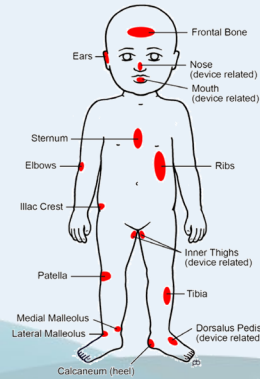
# Risks to SKIN

It is vital that the person's postural care is managed efficiently otherwise, Pressure Sores will begin to appear.

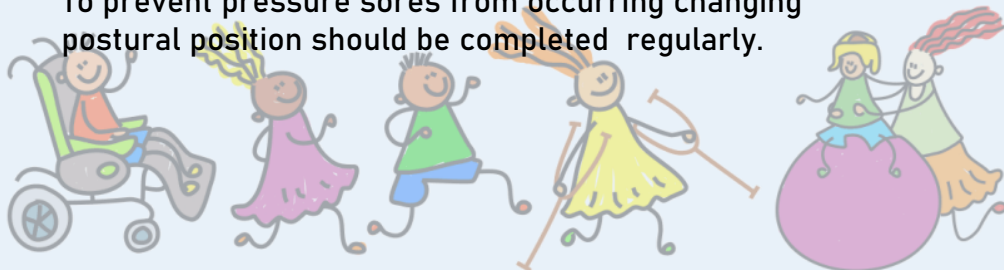
Pressure sores are injuries to the skin caused by prolonged pressure on the skin. You should be regularly monitoring the advice and treatments for pressure ulcers. To prevent pressure sores from occurring changing postural position should be completed regularly.

Treatment options if pressure damage occurs;

- applying dressings that speed up the healing process and may help to relieve pressure.
- moving and regularly changing your position- this is key in prevention
- using specially designed static foam mattresses or cushions, or dynamic mattresses and cushions that have a pump to provide a constant flow of air.

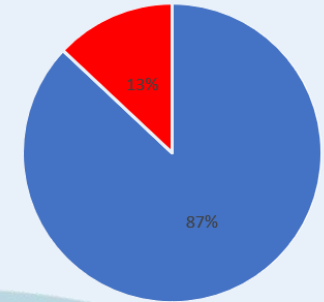


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# Let's get to the facts

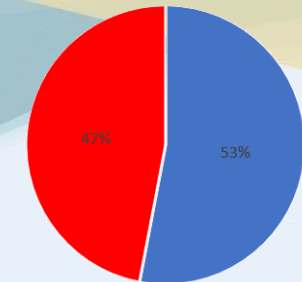
There are 8,760 hours in a year



On average a child will spend approximately 1,140 hours at school

■ HOURS IN YEAR ■ HOURS IN SCHOOL

7,620 hours at home of which 3,600 for these hours spent in bed



Night time positioning is just

■ HOURS SPENT AT HOME ■ HOURS SPENT IN BED



Children and young people with altered tone are at greater risk of postural compensations and thus more high risk to adopt detrimental postures.

## High Tone - Spasticity

This is when muscle tension becomes tighter and can cause muscle shortening. This can lead to loss of joint range and movement and the joint can become fixed. When joints become fixed this is known as contractures.

## Low Tone

This is when muscles are floppy and don't support the skeletal structure properly causing poor posture and balance.

### Who should be involved in postural management?

Postural Management should involve everyone who has contact with the child including:

Parents/carers/grandparents/siblings/friends etc

Teachers & Support staff

Allied Health Professionals

Orthotists

Doctors (Paediatricians MUST be onboard)

Other hospital staff

Wheelchair services

Equipment companies and their representatives.



# The Benefits of Postural Care

## Inclusion



Posture is vital to our level of function and greatly affects our ability to carry out daily tasks. Good and appropriate posture can be the difference between a person being involved or not.

When sitting, the person can have the best opportunity to make eating, drinking and being involved in activities easier.

## Communication



Good posture and positioning can allow a person to interact with their environment and others by using gestures, speech, objects, photos and behaviours. When a person has good posture and is in a good position, there can be more opportunities for communication.



## Swallowing

An individual's posture and positioning has a big impact on the safety of their swallow. Good posture and positioning supports a safe, controlled and coordinated swallow - helping to remove the risk of choking.

## Digestion

Good positioning helps to support digestion which will reduce problems of reflux and heartburn. Also the management of good posture will remove the risk of choking. Maintaining good posture can help to the person to feel socially included at meal times.