



Seating Advice for Residential Care

The frail elderly and disabled in care spend much of their day sitting, often in unsuitable chairs, which restrict their mobility and cause them to adopt slumped postures.

Correct seating allows clients to:

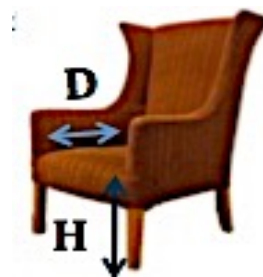
- breathe more easily reducing the risk of pneumonia
- swallow with less effort
- maintain good posture reducing the chance of developing painful fixed deformities
- participate in more activities
- mobilise more easily reducing the stress on care staff

When a resident has difficulty rising from an armchair, consider the seat height, depth, width, slope and firmness, and the armrest height.

When choosing an armchair for your residents consider these things:

a) Height: For comfort and ease of getting out of the chair:

- allow a 90° angle at the hip, between the thigh and body
- feet need to rest comfortably on the floor
- have enough heel space under the chair for standing.



b) Width: There needs to be a space of 2-3 fingers either side of the body to allow wriggle room and to keep the armrests comfortable.

c) Depth: The depth needs to ensure a good upright posture and for ease

- user's bottom needs to be at the back of the chair while feet still on the ground
- ensure seat edges are curved to prevent pressure behind the legs.
- space between chair and back of the knees needs to be a 2-3 fingers space to avoid pressure behind the legs

d) Back rest needs to:

- support the lower spine, neck and head
- be wide enough to support shoulders
- lean back only slightly

e) Arm rests need to:

- support the forearms and hands without raising the shoulders
- allow a 90° angle at the elbow, between the forearm and upper arm
- be firm enough to help with standing



f) The **chair surface** needs to:

- be comfortable and firm, for ease of getting out
- easily cleaned
- a fabric that won't cause sweating

Residents come in all shapes and sizes, we recommend Residential Providers

- purchase a range of different height, width and depth chairs
- use chair raisers for taller people
- purchase chairs with height adjustable legs if possible

Choosing wheeled chairs

For staff safety when choosing wheeled chairs, ensure the wheels are larger enough to push easily on all floor surfaces while allowing the ambulant person's feet to rest on the floor so they can stand easily. If your current wheeled chairs are hard for staff to push, see if you can get larger castors or wheels, or check that fluff is not restricting the wheels..

Couches

We don't recommend couches as they are harder to get out of and harder to assist someone to stand.