

What are **YOUR** Seating and Mobility Issues?

As people with spinal cord injuries age, changes to their seating and mobility needs arise. Unfortunately, there is no formalized system in Manitoba to address these changes on a regular basis therefore you must advocate for your own seating and mobility needs and there are options out there for you.

One thing leads to another...

Are any of these common issues a problem for you?

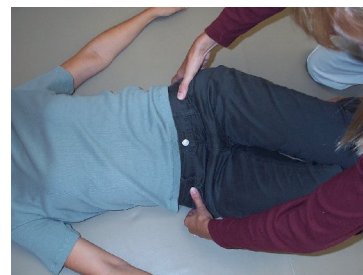
- Slouching, leaning or body asymmetry
- Pain or discomfort in your back, neck or legs
- Skin breakdown on your hips, legs, feet, back or elbows
- Shoulder or wrist pain during mobility or transfers
- Decreasing function during mobility of the wheelchair or during other daily activities

We have found through our years of working with spinal cord injured individuals that the longer you leave a seating issue, the worse it gets and the more difficult it is to remedy. We suggest that you receive a complete seating assessment within five years of your original injury and every five years following that to ensure that you have the correct wheelchair base, cushion, backrest and accessories for your particular needs and to prevent any of the common issues from arising. Products change, too and there may be new, more suitable equipment for you on the market. If you are already experiencing some of these issues, we recommend that you have your seating assessed as soon as possible to prevent further concerns.

For example, if you are finding that you simply lean more to the left in the chair, this can cause a number of other problems. It can cause undue pressure on the left side of your buttocks which can lead to skin breakdown as well as poor posture and potential muscle tightening in your pelvis, legs, trunk and neck which can in turn lead to back, leg and neck pain as time progresses.

What you should do...?

A thorough seating and mobility assessment addresses these issues by looking at your current seating and mobility status, assessing your physical strengths and limitations and determining your functional needs for everyday living in the wheelchair. A therapist can work with you to trial new equipment and establish which equipment is most suitable for you to ensure that your seating is optimal for your particular functional needs and to prevent problems from arising.



Corinna Klassen, OTM and Angie Maidment, OTM have over 20 years of seating and mobility experience. They have both worked at the Health Sciences Centre on the Spinal Cord Injury Unit and the Adult Seating Clinic. Therapy First offers in home occupational therapy, physiotherapy, massage therapy and recreation services.

Feel free to contact Therapy First with seating or general OT questions or for further information on therapy options in your area.

E-mail us at OT@TherapyFirst.ca or contact us by phone at Corinna (p) 204-612-0399 or Angie (p) 204-612-0398. You can also check out our website at www.TherapyFirst.ca .

