

Special Seating: An Illustrated Guide

Always keep in mind the person's original objectives when providing postural support. The person's need for comfort, movement, and/or stability for function will guide where and how much postural support the person requires. Ask yourself the following questions:

1. Specifically **where** are your hands supporting the person's body (i.e. posterior pelvis, where in the posterior and lateral spine, legs, arms, etc.)?
2. **What** are your hands doing? Are they "correcting" or "reducing" the person's posture? Are they providing stability? Are they preventing abnormal movement patterns?
3. **How much force** are you applying with your hands to support, stabilize, or correct each part of the body? Remember, do not correct beyond what is practical and comfortable. Watch for signs of resistance to correction, including facial expressions, increased spasticity, and discomfort.
4. In what **direction** are your hands applying the support?
5. How much **surface contact** is necessary to provide postural support? One finger? A full hand? This will give you an idea of the shape and contour of contact surfaces.
6. What is the **least amount of support** needed?
7. Describe the posture of the pelvis and trunk when the head is most **balanced** over the pelvis. Where are your hands supporting the person?
8. In what posture(s) is the person active and ready for **functional movement**? If the person does not have good active movement and control, assess this during **simulation with materials** because the person may first require a lot of postural support.

Helpful Hint

A person will feel comfortable and relaxed when minimal effort is required to sit up. If the person relaxes in your hands, then you may have achieved the balance point.

Helpful Hint

A photograph taken of the person in her neutral posture is a very helpful tool, as it is often difficult to adequately observe and describe all the details of her posture.