



Symmetrikit Postural Care : Symmetrisleep FAQ's

January 2014.

Can I use Symmetrisleep on a dynamic “pressure mattress”?

Experience and recent studies with pressure monitors suggest that you can, however with any new equipment make frequent inspections of the skin until you are comfortable that everything is OK. If later on there are changes (health, equipment medication, continence, nutrition etc. then this should be reviewed).

If you read the download of the Brightwater study,([link here](#)) you will see that they were able to reduce the use of dynamic mattresses without skin breakdown. If in doubt, you may have to compromise: omit the Airmantle and just use the receptor sheet and top sheet on the mattress adding padded brackets or pillows. Remember, if postural care issues are not addressed, the pressure management along with general care may become more difficult and more expensive.

What mattress would you recommend?

That is not really for us to say, however the mattress should certainly be of good quality and meet appropriate standards.

Which position is it best to lie in?

Supine is the easiest in which to achieve a supported symmetrical position however not everyone will tolerate a sudden change. Also there are understandable concerns regarding airways. It may be that you can pick a time of the day when there is a higher level of supervision to spend time in supine and at times when the family are asleep to use side lying. Likewise it may be that you choose supine when clear of lung infection and side lying when there are problems. If in doubt please discuss this with a clinician.

Semi side lying is widely used in elderly care in the Netherlands however you need to ensure that the pelvis and chest are aligned so that the spine is not rotated.

We are also told that those who are mechanically ventilated should not be positioned supine.

What about turning?

If you are turning because someone has woken up and is uncomfortable then it is likely that improved support will lead to increased comfort and less disturbances and a better night sleep for all.

If you are turning for pressure care or as part of a postural care programme then you should continue doing so however you may find it easier to use Symmslyde.

It was interesting to note that in the case of the Brightwater trial ([link as above](#)) that the incidence of turning was greatly reduced.

Can I use it on a “turning Bed”.

We have used it successfully on beds that slowly tilt from one side to another.

How long can someone lie in a Symmetrikit Sleep system?

Most sleep all night in the system however it may take several months to get the best out of it. Some users may only tolerate it for several hours, however that is still a positive outcome as even only 2 hours a night equals 1 month (730 hours) of stretch therapy

Who needs a Sleep system?

As a rule of thumb, anyone who cannot change their position in bed voluntarily or only with great difficulty. We have many users with high tone and involuntary movement.

What age groups can you cater for?

We work with early intervention through to elderly care. We have looked at neo-natal systems however we found that special care baby units manage well enough with the materials they have to hand.

Can I use Symmetrisleep when the back of the bed is raised?

Symmetrisleep can be used to stop someone falling to the side and to stop them sliding down the bed. Use medium rather than small brackets at the chest and use a knee block with the securing strap in place or use small pillow under the the gluteal crease and secured directly to the Velcro. You can also use a V pillow behind the knees, secured with Velcro to the receptor sheet.

What about tilting the whole mattress?

If the bed allows the mattress to be pivoted around a central point with the head higher than the feet (reverse Trendelenburg) this does allow you more options.

Is there a weight limit?

We haven't found anyone who needs the system who is too heavy for it. When we do, we will update this section.

How do you clean Symmetrisleep?

Follow this link to our instruction leaflet. [Xxxxxx](#)

Do I need to buy a whole system?

No, you can just buy the parts you need.

How long will a system last?

This is difficult to answer as there are so many factors involved. 5 years would be a good life for the fabric components and some have lasted longer. Remember that you can replace just one or two components should they wear faster.

Can I reduce the risk of suffocation by using a Symmetrisleep system?

If you are happy with your current pillows you can still use them. Also the Airmantle with a Coolover top is very air permeable so if you are using one, you could put the pillow underneath the airmantle. NB the wipe down airmantle is not permeable.

How do I choose between bamboo and Coolover sheets?

Although bamboo is excellent for removing perspiration, if you sweat heavily or have trouble with temperature control than the Coolover will be worth the extra investment.

Does the system protect the bed against spillage/incontinence?

The Airmantle with Coolover has a bottom layer of wipe-down Polyurethane (PU) so will protect the bed. You can also use it PU side up if you do not want to keep washing the airmantle. Alternatively if it is likely to be a regular problem then the wipe-down airmantle is the one to go for.

What do I need for a bigger bed?

Bigger top-sheets and a bigger receptor sheet; The other components remain the same including the Airmantle.