



Advocating for Mobility & Independence

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The importance of wheelchair evaluations:

- An inappropriately configured wheelchair can result in negative consequences to one's physical functioning (*skin integrity, breathing difficulties, digestion issues*), safety and quality of life.
- Will also increase the likelihood of equipment abandonment.



The evaluation process:

- Educate yourself ahead of time! You are a part of the team and need to contribute!
- Wheelchair Referral: prescription from doctor, supporting documentation
- Wheelchair Assessment: history and functional assessment, goals, ROM capabilities vs. limitations, posture/tone/balance, specific measurements
- Equipment Trial/Decision
- Submission to Insurance and Ordering Process
- Denials and Appeals
- Delivery and Fitting



How to educate yourself ahead of time:

- Call insurance to clarify your wheelchair benefits and seating clinic options.
- Familiarize yourself with the different wheelchair types, brands and accessory options available (or allowed by your insurance).
- Call the seating clinic and learn who is on the evaluation team - advocate for specific personnel if necessary (OT, PT, ATP, equipment distributors).
- ★ Document details of your daily activities, community activities, transportation needs, and measurements of home, work and community environments to help your team determine and justify the most appropriate chair for your needs (“must-have” accessories, drive-style preference, distance and speed requirements and terrain capabilities you need).

DME (Durable Medical Equipment) vs. CRT (Complex Rehab Technology):

Durable medical equipment refers to equipment such as scooters, manual wheelchairs, canes, walkers and other items that can be purchased from a durable medical equipment provider.



Complex rehab technology is more specialized, consisting of a CRT wheelchair or power wheelchairs with power positioning components, seating and electronics. These items are highly customizable and require professional assessments by ATP certified therapists.



Wheelchair type classifications:

Group 1: manual

Group 2: consumer power chairs

Group 3: CRT – Complex Rehab Technology wheelchairs



Wheelchair type classifications:

Group 2

- Captain's-style seating
- 3 mph top speed
- Minimum battery range 7 miles
- Suspension not required
- Built to climb obstacles up to 1.5 inches high
- Sit and drive design, non-expandable electronics

Group 3

- Rehab seating with powered seat functions
- 4.5 mph top speed
- Minimum battery range 12 miles
- Suspension required
- Built to climb obstacles up to 2 inches high
- Allows for expandable electronics that evolve over time (can add specialty controls)

Wheelchair brands:

- Your insurance coverage may dictate your wheelchair brand, so check with them first, then advocate for an equipment distributor on your eval team who sells multiple brands so that you will be able to sit in/try out multiple models.



Permobil



Invacare



Quantum



Quickie

Wheelchair features and accessories:

- Familiarize yourself with wheelchair accessory options before your evaluation to discuss with your team the ones you want to consider.



Custom joysticks, Bluetooth and phone app capabilities



Additional trunk or head supports



Active Reach/anterior tilt, iLevel power adjustments



Additional USB ports for charging personal devices



Back-up camera, headlights and taillights or custom lighting

Wheelchair “drive-style” options:

Determine which type of drive-style will best suit your needs:

Rear-Wheel Drive

- 2 large drive wheels in back, 2 caster wheels in front
- Power distributed between 4 tires (vs. 6) allowing more power per wheel; extra power from rear wheels makes this option ideal for more aggressive outdoor terrain or softer terrain (carpet, grass).
- Larger base, wider turn radius
- Naturally tracks straight so less sensitive to oversteering
- Capable of highest speeds



Wheelchair “drive-style” options:

Determine which type of drive-style will best suit your needs:

Mid-Wheel Drive

- 2 large center drive wheels, 2 caster wheels in back and 2 in front; most stable style with 6 wheels contacting the ground
- Has the tightest turn radius, 360-degree maneuverability, best for small spaces and indoor situations
- Less power distributed per wheel so not as suited for outdoors/uneven terrain
- Most intuitive configuration and easiest to learn to drive
- Caster interference



Wheelchair “drive-style” options:

Determine which type of drive-style will best suit your needs:

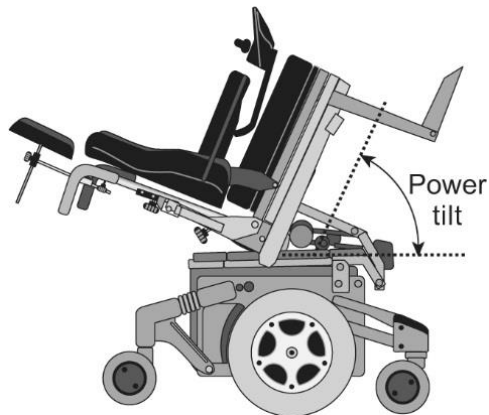
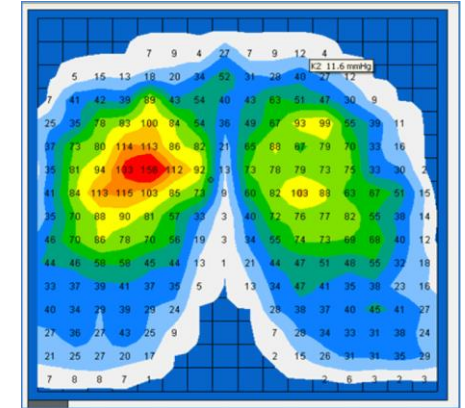
Front-Wheel Drive

- 2 larger drive wheels in the front, 2 caster wheels in back
- Drive wheels are first to encounter obstacles (such as curbs) and “grabs” the obstacle and pulls the rest of the chair over
- Power distributed between 4 tires (vs. 6) allowing more power per wheel; better on softer terrain and uneven surfaces
- Overall speed is lower and can “fishtail” at higher speeds
- Not the smallest turn radius but still good at turning tight corners



Pressure maps and pressure relief options:

- Positional pressure relief may not be possible for those with FOP (push ups, lateral leans, forward leans)
- Mechanical pressure relief options should be considered: **tilt, recline and standing**



Commercial Seats and Backs:

- Foams, air, gel and sometimes a combination of each.
- All cushions are NOT created equal!
- Each person's weight, height, postural deformities, diagnosis, etc. determine how a cushion will work for them.
- Balance between pressure distribution and durability.



Why use Custom Seating/Molded Cushions?



Why use Custom Seating/Molded Cushions?

- Precise accommodation of atypical FOP bone growth and postures
- More consistent pressure relief (maximizes the body's contact surface area with the cushion providing better protection of skin and deep tissue)
- Conserves energy/minimizes fatigue during ADL's and mobility
- Early Intervention vs. Last Ditch Effort
- Access alternative driving controls



Why use Custom Seating?



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*Mary's clinical
experience with
custom-molded
cushions and
meeting Nancy*



Nancy's custom-molded cushion, Q&A



Nancy Sando,
FOP community member

Thank You!

