



Sleeping: Adjustable Beds

Some people may consider an adjustable bed to support many challenges such as breathing, mobility or sleeping discomfort. Here are some recommendations to consider.



What is an Adjustable Bed?

Adjustable beds are used in hospitals and are often used in homecare. An adjustable bed can be moved through a range of different lying or sitting positions. Height adjustments and raising the upper body may assist a person to get out of bed with little or no assistance, depending on their medical condition. These beds are usually electrically operated, although manual or hydraulic models may be available.

Methods of Operation

Electric

- User or attendant can operate, usually by pressing buttons on a handset for all adjustments.
- Alternative controllers such as a scanning or a joystick device can be used by people who have difficulty pressing buttons.



Manual/Mechanical

- The height adjustment is often operated by an attendant with a winding handle or foot pedal.
- The head elevation is manually adjusted by an attendant.
- These beds are no longer in common use but tend to be the cheapest option. These beds require more effort and assistance from others than electrically operated beds.

Height

Also referred to as 'Hi-Lo', this option raises and lowers the bed height to assist with:

- Getting in and out of bed.
- Transferring to and from a wheelchair at the same height as the bed.
- Making the bed.
- Minimising the risk of injury to a carer assisting a person in bed by working at an optimal height. It should also encourage them to position their body safely and maintain good posture while working.
- Making transfers with a hoist easier.

Leg Elevation

- Elevates the lower legs for comfort.
- Assists with circulation and fluid drainage.
- May relieve lower back pain.



Knee Break

- Provides a leg elevation option.
- Supports the thighs on an angle.
- Keeps the lower legs elevated and parallel to the mattress.
- Helps prevent a person from sliding down in the bed



Head Elevation

Raising the head of the bed will support a person's back and head in addition to:

- Sitting up in bed with support.
- Getting out of bed.
- Changing position in bed to different angles.
- Alleviating back pain or reducing breathing difficulties.
- Supporting people while reading, watching TV, doing craft activities, eating and drinking



Trendelenberg

- Entire bed can be tilted towards the head or towards the feet.
- May assist with conditions such as hypotension (low blood pressure), shock, medical procedures, circulation problems, breathing difficulties or reflux.



Styles

- Available in single, king single, double, queen and king sizes.
- Another option is two singles placed alongside each other, adjusted separately.



Mattresses



- Needs to be able to allow the bed to be adjusted.
- Usually made of foam, latex or air. Some custom spring mattresses can also be flexible enough to be used.
- Pressure care mattresses and overlays are also available. Seeking advice from a health professional is recommended if this is required.

Castors

- Larger castors will increase the clearance and maneuverability of the bed and the overall height.
- Castors are available with easy-to-operate brakes.



More information

For further information, or advice, about any item contained in this information sheet, please contact Independent Living Centre Tasmania Inc.(ILCT):

- Call 1300 452 827 to speak to a health professional.
- Visit our website www.ilct.com.au or email info@ilct.com.au.
- ILCT visits communities around Tasmania. Contact ILCT to find out when we will be in your area.

ILCT provides Occupational Therapy, Physiotherapy, Speech Pathology, and Allied Health Assistant services, on a fee-for-service basis. Our team delivers comprehensive assessments and support that may include assistive technology, home modifications, communication aids, and other tailored interventions to enhance independence and quality of life.

ILCT specifically provides supports to those aged over 18, who are Tasmanian residents and are of any culturally-diverse background. ILCT are a registered provider under the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

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