

Introduction

After a stroke some people have difficulty finding safe and comfortable positions in which to rest. This information leaflet gives advice on suitable positions for both day and night.

Special mattresses and seat cushions may be used with pillows and blankets to help support people in these positions.

Why is positioning important?

Good positioning can help to:

- prevent pressure areas
- allow the person to use their weaker side
- help the person to relax and rest
- prevent tight muscles helping to limit pain
- reduce risk of joint problems
- enable social contact
- allow comfortable sleep

It is important that the position is changed regularly for the most benefits.

If you are worried about any of the problems discussed in this leaflet, please ask your GP, Physiotherapist or Occupational Therapist for advice.

Contact details

If you have any further questions regarding this information please do not hesitate to call the Physiotherapy Department

Tel: 01483 571122 ext. 4153

PALS and Advocacy contact details

Contact details of independent advocacy services can be provided by our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) who are located on the right hand side as you enter the main reception area. PALS are also your first point of contact for health related issues, questions or concerns surrounding RSCH patient services.

Telephone: 01483 402757

Email: rsc-tr.pals@nhs.net

Opening hours: 9.00am–3.00pm
Monday to Friday

If you would like information documents in large print, on tape or in another language or form please contact PALS.

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How to help position a person after a stroke



Neurological Physiotherapy

In the following pictures, the person's most affected side is highlighted in blue.

Lying on the affected side

Key points:

- bring bottom shoulder slightly in front of the body
- support the upper knee on pillows to prevent rolling backwards



Lying on the unaffected side

Key points:

- bring bottom shoulder in front of the body
- tuck bottom hand under the pillow
- straighten the top leg and support it on pillows in-line with the body



Lying on back

Key points:

- Hips and shoulders should be even
- Support head and shoulders with pillows
- Support affected arm with a pillow slightly out to the side



Sitting in bed

Key points:

- Hips and shoulders should be even
- Both arms should be supported on pillows



Sitting up in a chair

(A suitable chair should be recommended by a qualified assessor)

Key points:

- Body should be central
- Shoulders, hips and knees should be even
- Thighs should be supported to point forward and not allowed to fall out to the sides or rest together
- Feet should be flat on the floor or footrests
- Arms should be brought forward and rested on pillows
- Hands open and fingers straight



If this position is not achievable, consider whether person is sitting in an appropriate supportive chair.

Arm resting position

It is good to vary the position of the arm, with palms facing upwards or downwards and elbows at different angles.

Pictures used with permission from Chest Heart and Stroke Scotland.