

A Guide to Selecting Adjustable Beds



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Assistive technology (AT) is a piece of equipment, device or system that provides people with practical solutions to everyday life activities. You can search our National Equipment Database www.askned.com.au to view a range of products online.

Sizes

- Single
- King single – may be required for larger stature people who need extra width to turn
- Double
- Queen/King – often have option of central split that enables each side to be operated independently.

Why would you choose an adjustable bed?

- Difficulty moving or changing position in bed, or need positioning for activities like eating or watching TV.
- Trouble getting in and out of bed, or need height adjustment for safe transfers (e.g., from bed to wheelchair).
- Medical needs, such as pressure relief, lymphoedema, pain management, or breathing difficulties.
- Improved health and safety for the carer

Alternative equipment to consider

- Bed raisers – a plastic or wooden block which is placed under each bed leg to raise height of the bed for user's experiencing difficulty with sitting down and standing up.
- Adjustable wedge pillows can help position the body for comfort, elevating the head, legs, or both. These can improve circulation and relieve pressure.

Operating controls

Electrical controls can be operated by the user or carer and may be hand-held or fixed to the bed frame. Ensure controls are easy to reach. Some models feature wireless controls for convenience or

memory settings for pre-set positions.

Note: Noise levels and speed of operation may vary by model.

Height

The bed height can be fixed or adjustable. Consider the required height range for ease of getting in and out, as well as for the carer's safety (always consider the height of bed to top of mattress).

Ensure adequate clearance under the bed if using a hoist for transfers. If additional pressure-care equipment is needed, such as an overlay, it will increase the bed's overall height.

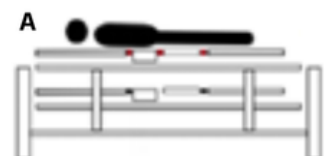


Electric bed functions

Height adjustment (Hi-low)

Changes the overall height of the bed. On some floor line beds the height can be adjusted to floor height to reduce risk of injuries due to falls.

- Assists the user to adjust the bed to a safe height to help them to get in and out of bed.
- The bed can be adjusted to a safe working height for carers.



Head raise

Allows the upper section of the bed to be elevated, raising the user's trunk and head.

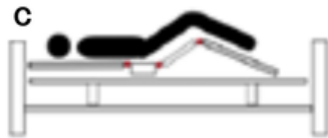
- Optimises position for breathing for users with breathing difficulties such as Asthma, COPD or sleep apnoea.
- Allows users to get into comfortable position for activities such as eating, reading etc.
- May provide some pressure relief and comfort.



Knee break

Allows the section of the bed (under the knees) to be raised, creating a bend at the knees.

- This function can be used in conjunction with head raise to prevent the user from sliding down the bed.
- May provide pressure relief and increased comfort.



Leg raise

As per knee break, however rather than just bending the knees, the lower leg is elevated to bring feet in line with the elevated knee height.

- Allows user to elevate legs fully to improve circulation and reduce risk of swelling and oedema.
- May provide pressure relief to lower back and hip area and can alleviate leg discomfort.



Trendelenburg

Allows the user to be tilted so that the head is lowered, and the feet are raised, creating a head down, feet up position.

- Improves circulation, pressure relief by helping redistribute body weight, postural support.



Reverse Trendelenburg

Involves raising the head of the bed, while lowering the foot section, so that the body is positioned with the head higher than the feet.

- Improves breathing, reduces pressure on abdomen and aids with digestion.
- Improves circulation and may be recommended for some post-surgery care.



Castors

Larger castors improve clearance, manoeuvrability, and overall bed height. They may feature individual brakes or a single lever to lock all brakes at once.

Types of mattresses

A firmer mattress can aid in transfers on and off the bed. Pressure care mattresses and overlays are also available; consult a health professional to find the best option for your needs.

The mattress should allow for bed adjustments and is typically made from foam, latex, or air. Custom spring mattresses may also work if flexible. Since mattress sizes vary in Australia, it's important to check or trial that the mattress fits the bed's sleep surface.

Options available

- Bed that automatically turns the person from side to side.
- Floor line bed which lowers height to floor level to reduce risk of fall injuries.
- Transfer aids, such as bed rails, bed sticks, or over-bed poles. **NOTE: always consult with an Allied Health Professional for risk safety**

assessment due to associated safety risks including risk of entrapment and, falls and injuries.

- Battery back-up for power outages.
- Head and foot boards for added support.
- Position of controls in reach to enhance bed mobility.
- Bed extension kits to extend the length of the bed for taller users.

Maintenance and support

Check if local support is available for servicing and maintenance. Many suppliers offer trial or hire options to help you select the right product for your needs.



Professional advice

With many options available, it's advisable to seek professional guidance to determine if an electric bed meets your needs. Therapists can provide assessment, trials, prescription, setup, and training.



Find out more about a wide range of helpful products and devices on NED, our National Equipment Database at askned.com.au. Need help with NED? Call our helpline on 1300 885 886.

Our experienced health professionals can also assist in providing strategies and advice on finding and using the right product for you. Call us on 9381 0600 or complete an appointment request form via our website at www.indigo.org.au

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