

The
Little
Book of Seating

Tips and advice
to help make
seating simple! >>>

This little book is your new best friend when it comes to seating! Take it with you wherever you go to ensure you always have the help you need....

- Identify normal posture patterns and postural abnormalities
- Assess the causes of pressure damage and how to prevent risk
- Complete seating assessments with confidence
- Understand which solutions are suitable for your clients' needs.

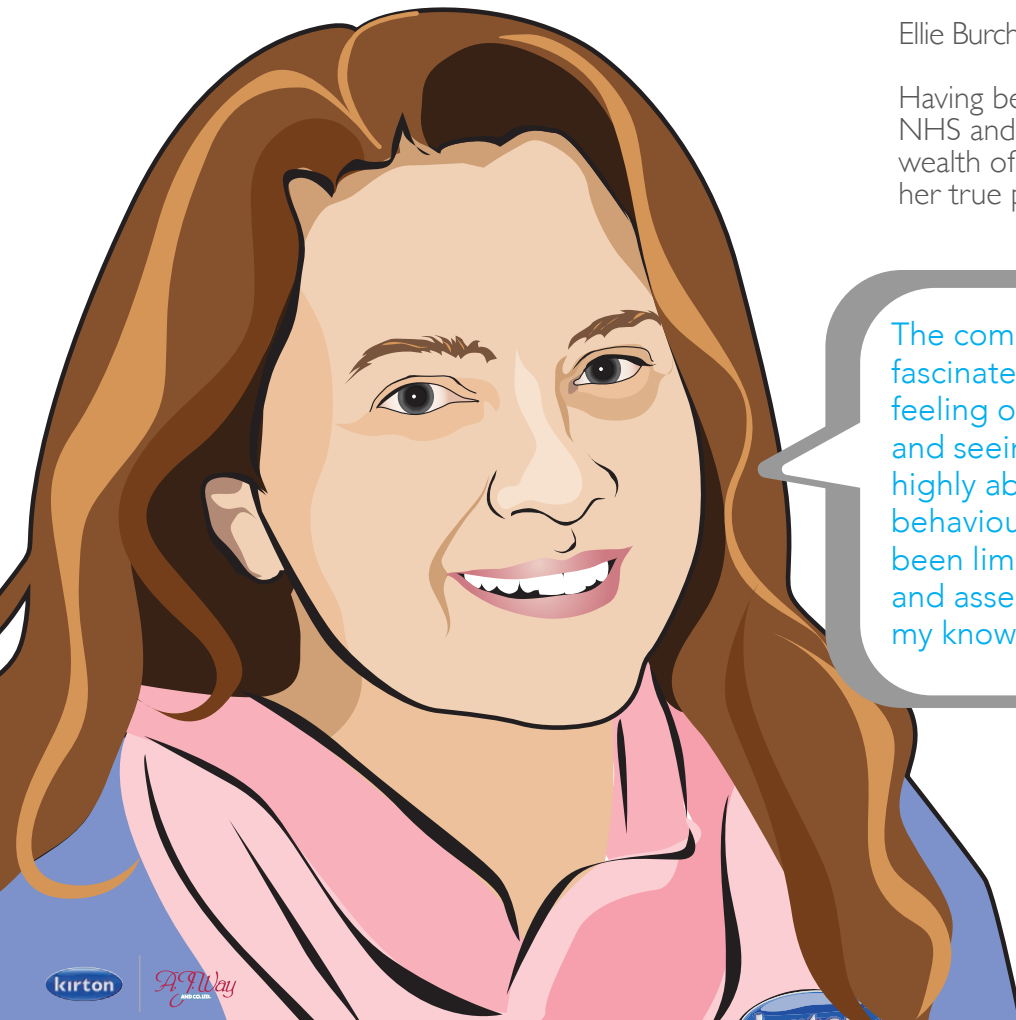
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Meet Ellie!

Ellie Burcher is the Kirton OT Ambassador for Seating.

Having been an OT for many years, both with the NHS and as an independent practitioner, she has a wealth of experience across many clinical areas, but her true passion is for seating.

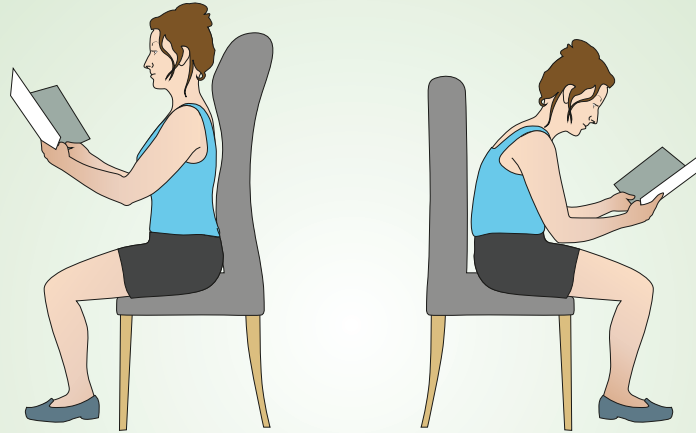


The complexities of seating have always fascinated me and nothing beats the feeling of getting it right for someone and seeing them sat correctly! From highly abnormal postures and challenging behaviours to seating clients that have been limited to 24-hour bed care, I've seen and assessed all sorts. Now I want to share my knowledge and experience with you!

If you have any queries or would like to discuss something in more depth you can always visit the 'Ask Ellie' page at www.kirton-healthcare.co.uk and submit your questions directly to Ellie.

Posture

The key to achieving a good seated position is good posture...



Good, '**Normal**' Posture

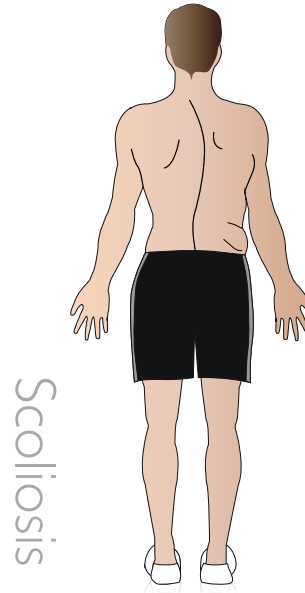
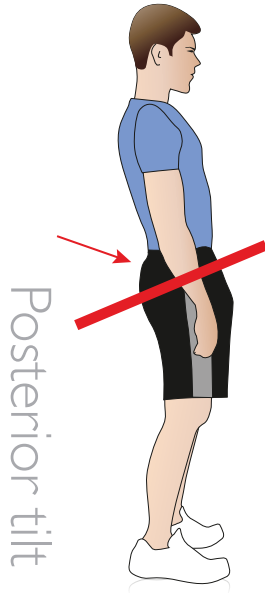
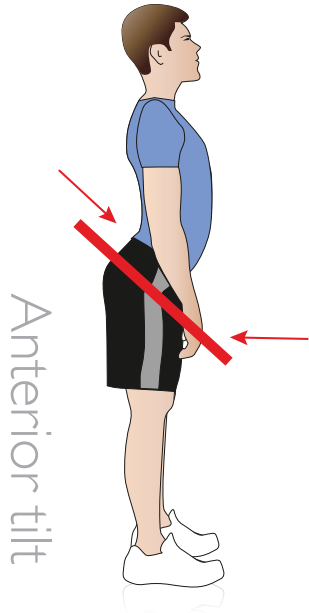
- Physically and socially enabling
 - Simple changes of positioning
 - Increased comfort
 - Reduced pain
 - Greater confidence
 - Enhanced function
- Eating, drinking, communicating

Poor, '**Abnormal**' Posture

- Physically and socially restrictive
 - Difficulties swallowing
 - Difficulties breathing
 - Increased pain
 - Reduced confidence
 - Reduced function
- Eating, drinking, communicating

V.S.

Common Postural Abnormalities:



- Pelvis tilted forward
- Exaggerated lumbar curve
- Shoulder blades retracted
- Eyes upwards
- Reduced upper limb function

- Pelvis tilted backwards
- Rounded shoulders
- C-shaped spine
- Eyes downwards
- Reduced space in chest cavity

- Spine compensates by twisting to get back to mid-line
- Abnormal S-shaped lateral curvature of the spine

Other postural abnormalities to look out for include:

- Kyphosis - excessive outward curvature of the spine, causing forward flexion of the spine.
- Lordosis - excessive inward curvature of the spine.
- Windsweeping - characterized by both legs being thrown in the same direction.
- Contractures - shortening and hardening of muscles, tendons, or other tissue that leads to deformity and rigidity of joints.
- Pelvic obliquity - imbalance in the level of the hips causes tipping and increases pressure on hips.

Pressure Care

Pressure damage occurs when there is an interruption to the supply of oxygen and nutrients via the circulatory system.

This can be caused by many different factors:

- Direct pressure
- Force concentrated on a small area
Beware: Incorrect placement of cushions and accessories
- Friction and Shearing
- Layers of skin rubbing over each other
- Sliding down beds and chairs
Beware: Poor technique in manual handling

Other contributing factors:

- Incontinence
- Poor nutrition
- Moisture build up
- Prolonged time spent sitting
- Temperature

Look for the signs:

- Blanching
- Red patches
- Hollowness

Remember! Pressure sores can appear on almost any part of the body, (even the ears!) but the most common places to monitor regularly are the buttocks and sacrum, feet and heels, elbows and knees.



That's a relief! Discover your pressure relieving options at kirton-healthcare.co.uk

The solution?

Prevention is better than cure – always think about incorporating a pressure relieving seat module or cushion for those at risk of developing pressure related issues. Match the level of performance to the client's need but remember, it's always good to overcompensate rather than provide insufficient protection. Don't forget to also carefully consider the type of upholstery fabric too! Thick fabric coverings can impede the effectiveness of your pressure relief. A two-way stretch, vapour permeable covering like Dartex is recommended.



Identifying Needs & Goals

When assessing for any type of equipment it is vital to establish the client's needs and develop clear goals. This will benefit not just you and your prescription process but the client and their family too, who will then have a realistic expectation of what can be achieved with their new chair.

What do you want the chair to enable the client to do...

- Feed themselves?
- Manage fatigue?
- Maintain their posture?
- Improve their posture?
- Communicate & socialise more effectively?
- Reduce pain & discomfort?
- Get out of bed?

Don't forget to think about.....

Transfer method: is the client ambulant or non-ambulant? Will they need hoist access?

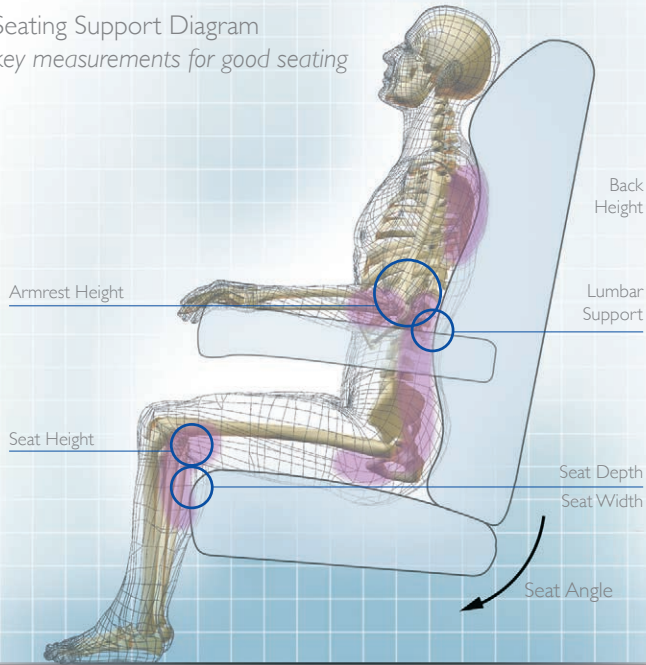
Pressure relief: what level of care or prevention is needed? Is the client at risk and will they be sitting for lengthy periods?

Environment: where will the chair be used and does it need to be portable? Who will adjust the chair's position and/or location?



Measuring

Seating Support Diagram
key measurements for good seating



There are five key measurements required for seating assessment:

- A. Seat width
- B. Seat depth
- C. Seat height
- D. Back height
- E. Armrest height

Accurate measurement is key!

- **Be clear** – are you measuring the chair or the client? Whichever you go for, be consistent and tell the manufacturer.
- **What type of tape measure are you using?** Don't let a fabric tape bend round the body as this can produce a very different result.
- **What are you measuring in?** It doesn't matter whether you use millimetres, centimetres or inches, as long as you are clear and stick to one or the other.
- **Ask the manufacturer for a prescription form to help detail information.**
- **Ask the manufacturer for training.**



Prescribing

It can be tricky to know which features relate to which behaviours or how they'll benefit your client.

Use the following as a quick-fire guide for matching chair features with your client's needs!

Does your client...

Consider...

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lean left or right? | Lateral Supports |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Contract at the knee? | Negative Angle Legrest |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Drop their head? | Back Recline
Tilt-in-Space |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Have a propensity for pressure sores? | Integral Pressure Relief
Tilt-in-Space |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Side transfer? | Drop Arm
Removable Arm |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Have poor balance? | Lateral Supports
Tilt-in-Space |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Slide forward in their chair? | Ramped Seat Module
Tilt-in-Space |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Have poor proprioception? | Clear Plastic Tray |

Is your client...

Consider...

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Ambulant? | Rise Function
Flip-up Footrest |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Non-Ambulant? | Good Hoist Access
Mobile Frame
Push Handle |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Kyphotic? | Waterfall Backrest
Articulating Backrest
T-Back Backrest |

For details of what these product features are or which chairs incorporate them visit www.kirton-healthcare.co.uk, where you will also find a decision making tree to help you select the right product.

Accessories

Postural accessories may or may not be needed in addition to a good chair. Used correctly, they will enhance a chair's effectiveness in managing posture and comfort, and can often be added at a later date as the client's needs change or develop.

- **Lateral Supports**

- Support reduced trunk control to maintain a mid-line position
- Can be set at different heights
- Available for legs too

- **Headrests**

- To enhance comfort or support
- Can be adjusted to suit the client's preference

- **Negative Angled Legrest**

- Useful for accommodating fixed knee contractures
- Can allow space to support standing transfers

- **Pelvic Positioners & Lapbelts**

- Can support involuntary movements
- Help maintain seated position

- **Tray**

- Supports social & practical activities such as eating and drinking
- Helps with proprioceptive skills



1. Lateral Supports
2. Headrests
3. Negative Angled Legrest
4. Pelvic Positioners & Lapbelts
5. Tray



Further accessories are available, visit www.kirton-healthcare.co.uk for details.

Setup

Your chair is only as good as its setup! A reliable, basic routine for setting up an adjustable tilt-in-space model is as follows....

1. **Seat the client.** If transferring by hoist, position the chair at an angle using the tilt-in-space and carefully lower the client by facing them and using a hand either side. This ensures the bottom goes right to the back of the seat with ease. ☐
2. **Adjust seat length.** Make sure the client's bottom is right at the back of the seat and then you should be able to get 2 fingers width behind the knee and the front of the seat. ☐
3. **Adjust foot plate height.** 19% of your body weight when seated goes through the soles of your feet so it is important they are supported. You want to adjust the foot plate so thighs are horizontal on the seat module. ☐
4. **Adjust back height.** Depending on the chair the correct height will vary, but make sure the head and shoulders are well supported. ☐
5. **Adjust back angle.** This will often depend on the client's preference, so try a few positions until they feel comfortable and supported. ☐
6. **Position lateral supports.** If required these should be used to help achieve a good midline position. Always use both left and right supports, regardless of which way the client is leaning. These can be set at different heights. ☐
7. **Adjust arm height.** Look at the shoulders and use them to gauge the correct position – if they're up by the ears you've gone too high! ☐
8. **Fit accessories.** Be sure you, the client and carers understand what each accessory is for and how to fit them correctly. They can cause more harm than good otherwise! ☐

Top tip: Always adjust seat length first - once seat length is adjusted you can adjust everything else around the client.

Completing a Seating Care Plan

Prescribing the right chair for your client is important but ensuring the chair is used correctly is absolutely essential. Completing a good assessment is only half the battle!

The key to ensuring the chairs you prescribe are used safely and to their full potential is to be clear and concise. Never assume anything, and produce a seating plan that anyone, from carers and nursing home staff to family members and friends, can understand.



A good seating plan should always include:

- ☐ Who the chair is provided for
- ☐ The type of chair and date of provision
- ☐ Details of accessories provided and what they are for
- ☐ Details on transferring in and out of the chair – method and which sling loops
- ☐ Sitting out times – length of time, frequency and time of day
- ☐ Safe use of the chair
- ☐ How to clean the chair
- ☐ Who to contact in case of repair
- ☐ Who to contact if the client needs re-assessing.

About Kirton



Where it all began...
Kirton was born from just one man and his dream. A dream of enabling people with various disabilities to enjoy sitting comfortably, something the able bodied take for granted every single day.

Kirton produced the UK's first ever specialist seating model back in the 1980s. Years later, Kirton continues to honour this legacy with an innovative, thoughtful and pioneering approach to seating. The Kirton portfolio includes a wide range of specialist chairs as well as bespoke riser recliner and fireside chairs from sister brand, A J Way. Discover more at www.kirton-healthcare.co.uk or www.ajway.co.uk.

Free Training



The Kirton team has decades of knowledge regarding specialist seating and wants you to benefit. Free training on **Pressure and Posture Management** is offered nationwide as well as demonstrations of all Kirton seating solutions, from fireside chairs and riser recliners through to dynamic tilt-in-space models. The highly trained Kirton advisors are happy to collaborate with you on seating assessments, too!



College of
Occupational
Therapists



Did you know our Posture & Pressure Management Training is CPD accredited by the COT.

Call **0800 212709** or visit **www.kirton-healthcare.co.uk** to discover more.



A.J. Way
AND CO. LTD.

The

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**For further information or more
copies of this book please contact us:**

The Kirton Healthcare Group Ltd
23 Rookwood Way
Haverhill
Suffolk CB9 8PB
UK

Telephone: +44(0)1440 705352

Facsimile: +44(0)1440 706199

E-mail: info@kirtonhealthcare.co.uk

Customer Helpline: 0800 212709

www.kirton-healthcare.co.uk

www.ajway.co.uk