



# Pressure Relief Techniques

After a spinal cord injury, you are at high risk of getting a pressure injury (bed sore). A pressure injury is a wound caused from constant pressure to the skin. When you have a spinal cord injury, you might not feel parts of your body very well. Pressure on the skin from lying and sitting too long causes the blood flow to be blocked. This can cause serious damage to your skin. Shifting your weight to reduce pressure is the best way to allow blood to get to your skin. For more about pressure injuries, check out the [Spinal Cord Essentials Pressure Injury Prevention](#) [handout](#).

Shift your weight to relieve pressure every 15 minutes. When doing a pressure relief movement, it should last 1-2 minutes.

## Relieving Pressure in Your Wheelchair

When in your wheelchair, shift your weight every 15 minutes. A pressure relief movement should last 1-2 minutes. There are many different ways you can relieve pressure. Your OT or PT can also provide suggestions based on your needs.

- Lean forward onto a table, chair, or desk.
- Lean to the side and then to the other side.
- If your chair can tilt, tilt your chair back as far as you can tolerate.
- If you have weak arms or hands, pay attention to your elbows. Keep them on soft surfaces and change their resting position often.



Contact your Physiotherapist for more information.

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### Pressure relieve in bed

Pressure injuries are also called 'bed sores'. Lying in bed all night without moving puts you at high risk of pressure injuries. Use pillows to reduce pressure from high risk areas. High risk areas while sleeping include your hips, heels, bum, and lower back.

When in bed you should turn at least once per night. If you are unable to do it by yourself, have someone help you during the night. Change positions by switching the side of the body that you are sleeping on.



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