

Measuring a client for seating: The Seating Surface

In our first article in this series, we looked at what we don't want to see happen. In this article, we will outline how to measure your client with accuracy and confidence.

The Concept

Ever moved house? Imagine that your client is a valuable and fragile object that you are packing in a box. You want the right sized box. You don't want it to squash it in and break or chafe it, neither do you want it loose and able to be shaken about.

Did you know?

We always fit the cushion to the client, and the chair to the cushion.

The Tools

- **Tape measure** – decide your base units. Most US based companies (Jay, ROHO) base their measurement in inches...

CAUTION – steel tape measures are useful because they assist you to measure straight lines, but they have sharp edges. Cloth tape measures are safer, BUT be careful to pull them tight. Don't measure around a client...


- **Calipers**
- **Two flat surfaces** – such as hardbacked books, or a pair of hands

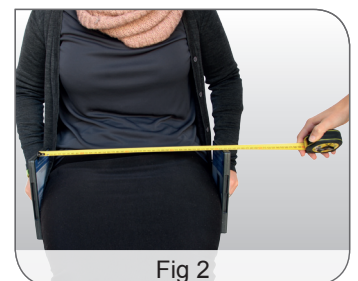
Preparation

Ideally, the client will be sitting on a firm surface with minimal side supports makes taking measurements easier. (You may need an assistant to provide lateral support if required) The area around them will be clear to allow you to move freely. They will be wearing comfortable clothing.

Taking Measurements: Seating Width

- 1) Identify the widest point across the hips. Use the calipers as shown. Fig 1.
- 2) If using flat surfaces, be sure that they are both vertical. Fig 2.
- 3) If using hands, be sure that they are vertical and keep fingers straight. Fig 3.
- 4) Record the measurement.

 Are they windswept? (Remember the box) – allow for extra width needed. Fig 4.



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Seating Depth

- 1) Locate the sacrum. Measure from there to the popliteal crease.
(Measurement #2) Use either your hand or a flat surface as shown. Fig 5.
- 2) Measure both legs as leg length discrepancy is common.
(Measurements #3 and #4)
- 3) Record the actual measurement. The cushion will be approx. 2-3 cm shorter than the seating length.
If your client is a foot propeller, it will be 3-4 cm shorter.



Fig 5

 You need the length of the seated surface. If client exhibits posterior pelvic tilt, this will be accommodated through the seating angle.

Next issue we will look at measuring for the backrest and footrests.

The Unicare pointers to taking measurements

- Know your base unit (cms or inches)
- Each measurement is a straight line between two points
- Measure at least twice
- Check your measurements against your knowledge of basic body proportions.



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