

Measuring Lower Leg Angle and Length

In this last article in our series on measuring for seating, we take a brief look at the critical role of legrest length and angles in seating. The goal of the legrest is, with pelvis in its optimal position, to load the thighs and maintain the lower leg in the best position to load the foot, whilst accommodating the hamstring range relative to seating.

Determine Angle

Sit the client in a chair on the correct cushion. Check hamstring tightness and select best angle in median range of movement. Remember to check both legs.

- If the angle is greater than the range tolerance of the hamstring (Pic A), the pelvis may rotate rearward and the client slides out of the chair.
- If the angle is less than the range tolerance of quadriceps (Pic B), the pelvis may be pulled into an anterior tilted position, with resultant trunk hyperextension and imbalance.

Setting Legrest Length

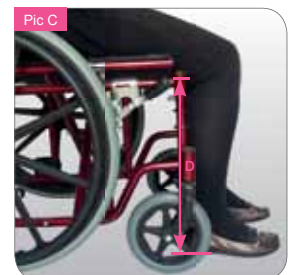
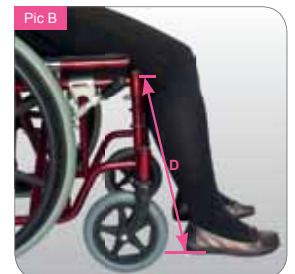
With the client seated in the chair, on the correct cushion, measure the client from the popliteal crease to the heel. This will approximate the legrest length required. (Measurement D)

Consideration of the following

- Abnormal ankle flexion eg foot drop – support foot using angle-adjustable footplates. Ankle huggers etc may be required.
- Air cushions (ROHO) – inflation levels can affect leg length settings – check that cushion is correctly inflated.
- Footwear – ascertain the typical footwear and include any build-up in measurement.
- Footplate treatments – such as gel or sheepskin covers can affect length.

Adjusting legrest length

- With the client seated in the chair, on the correct cushion, loosen the footplate length adjustment, and with the foot on the footplate, set length so thigh is loaded on cushion with foot loaded on footplate.
- If footplates are angle adjustable, loosen the mounts so that foot finds the most natural angle.
- Tighten, then adjust as necessary to best position as clinically determined.



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29 Alexandra Place, Bentley, Western Australia 6102
T 08 9351 7500 F 08 9350 5299
E info@unicarehealth.com.au W www.unicarehealth.com.au