



POSTURAL CARE WITH SYMMETRISLEEP



Information for this booklet has been referenced from:

www.symmetrikit.com/sleep-systems-for-all-ages.html

www.helpinghand.co.uk (The Helping Hand Company)

www.mencap.org.uk/advice-and-support/pml/pml-postural-care

link to: **“Postural care booklet”** (developed by *The Postural Care Action Group*)

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Symmetrisleep



Symmetrisleep enables people with movement problems to learn to lie straight. It can prevent body shape distortion or correct established problems when used as part of a 24 hour Postural Care Programme.

Maintaining body symmetry also protects joints from the destructive effects of gravity. The system allows for gentle progression by gradually introducing elements as tolerance improves.

It is easy to use and adjustable for any age, position and bed. Because night time comfort is improved, tone abnormality is improved with the added advantage that sleep time disturbances are also reduced.

Starting to use the Symmetrisleep system simply involves putting the **Velcro sheet**, pressure relieving **Airmantle** and **stretchy sheet** in place. You now have a flat surface for easy transfer.

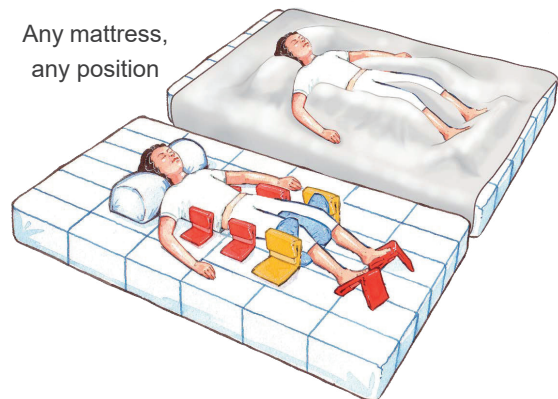
When the user is ready, the **brackets** and **pillows** that provide support are fitted. The system builds up quickly to support the client, rather than having to fit them to an existing form.

Fitting the brackets is easy and intuitive and fine adjustments can be made instantly.



The **Airmantle** helps those who cannot rearrange bedclothes to maintain a constant body temperature by putting a layer of air around the user to allow perspiration to evaporate and so improve their microclimate. The base is waterproof, so the mattress is protected.

Any mattress,
any position



SYMMETRISLEEP

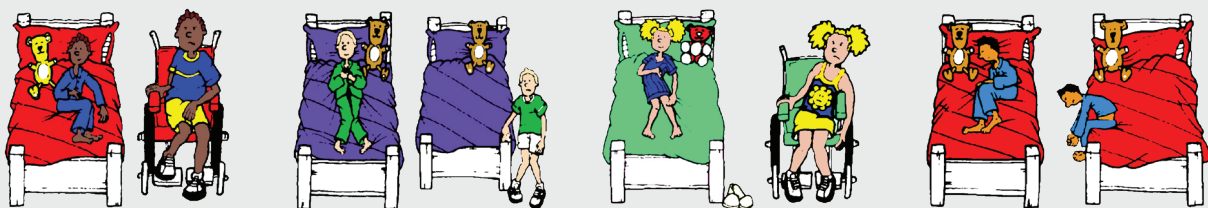
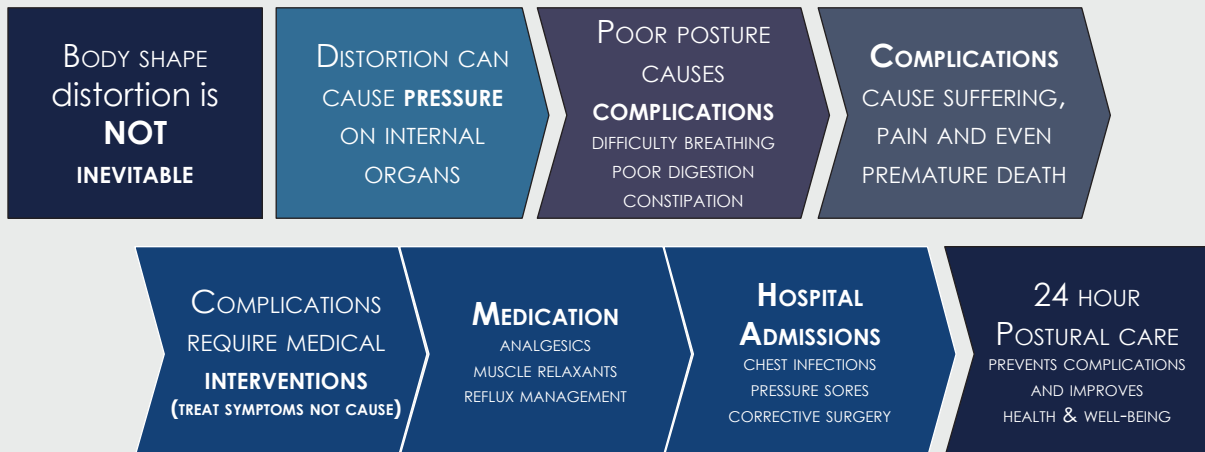
About Body Shape Distortion



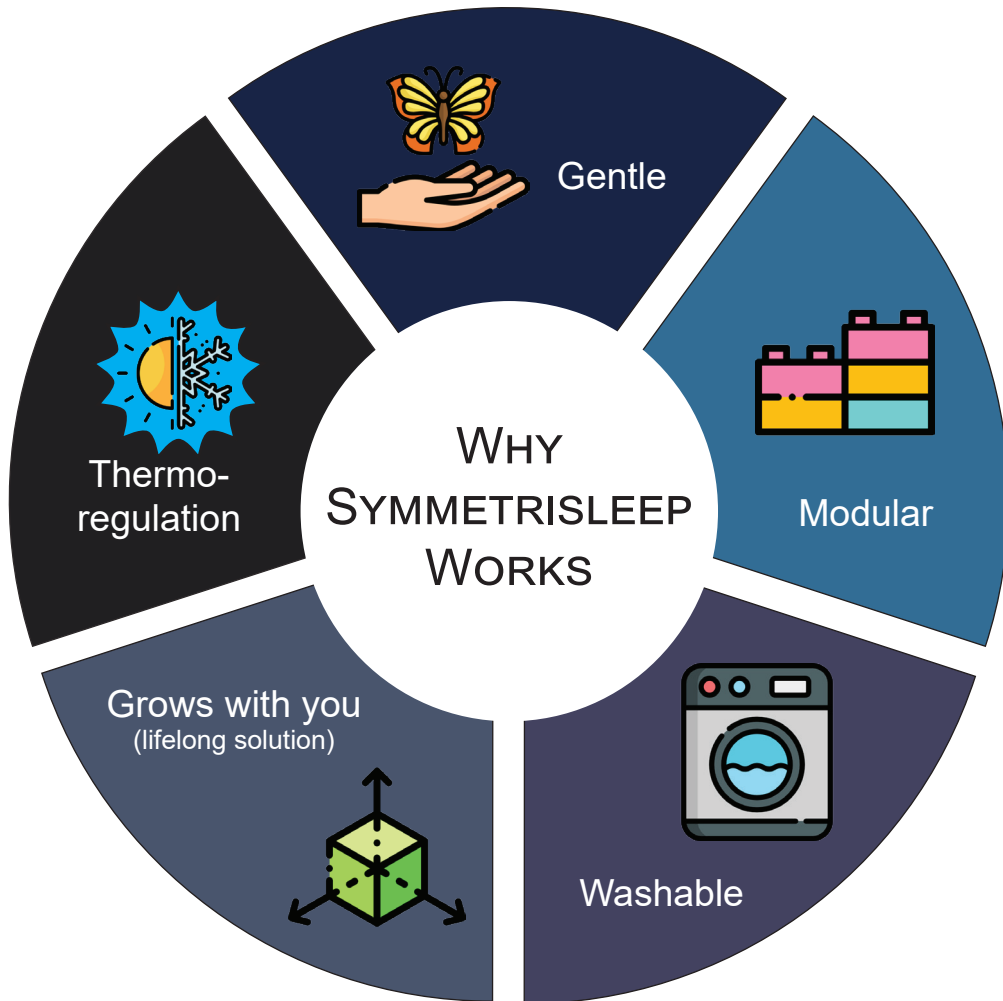
Body Shape distortion is not inevitable. There seems to be a general perception, however that people with limited movement are destined to eventually succumb to postural distortion and that complications and discomfort are just an unavoidable part of living with disability.

The good news is that in reality it is never too late to address postural care and that a multitude of issues can be improved or reversed as a result of a proper, continuous postural care plan.


Obviously, the sooner intervention is implemented, the better the outcomes and the more complications can be prevented or considerably improved upon. Symmetrisleep's modular sleep system includes a specialised early years positioning system for 0 - 3 year olds called "Primo" which can be used during the day for supported play and therapy as well as at night during sleep.



Body shape in lying translates into body shape sitting - **24 hour Postural Care** protects body shape




Gentle




Symmetrisleep can be introduced slowly. As individuals get used to their improved position, they can spend progressively longer periods lying straighter until they are happy to get through a whole night.

Modular




As the individual's sleep position improves, they may require less support and the components used can be reduced. They can be re-used and reconfigured as necessary.

Washable




The components used are all easily washable. The waterproof surfaces are easy to wipe clean and disinfect. The covers and linens are all conveniently machine washable.

Grows with you (lifelong solution)




Because the system is modular, it is really easy to adjust and reconfigure. Most components are placed each night and so intuitively the system is optimised to the individual at all times.

Thermoregulation



If you aren't able to regulate your temperature while sleeping by changing position or adjusting your covers, you will not have a fitful sleep. This can impact negatively on your quality of life. The Coolover fabric and airmantle overcome this issue

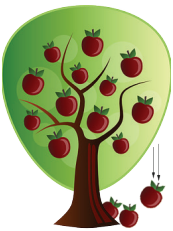


Problem

Gravity | Immobility

Gravity works constantly on our bodies. If you can't **change position** regularly, it will eventually cause flattening of the body shape.

Preferred positions, dictated by contractures, sensory impairments, etc. become habitual as the body shape accommodates the posture until eventually even the skeletal structure changes and the distortion results in those positions becoming obligatory as the person has no choice when unsupported.



Fear | Ignorance

Some people have a sleep system but are too **afraid** to use it, thinking that it causes pain and discomfort. They don't seem to realise that gradually implementing it fully can take months.

If you've never been able to touch your toes, you wouldn't expect to wake up one morning and suddenly be able to reach them!

Therapy services are often overlooked or have funding cut. This **ignorance** allows problems to develop that subsequently require more expensive treatments, yet could easily be prevented.



Solution

Protect body shape 24/7

Most people recognise the importance of daytime postural care but few recognise that this can be **negated** by lying for 8-12 hours in an unsupported destructive asymmetrical posture.

Night postural care has the added benefit of being able to **harness gravity** more effectively and act on muscles tone that is naturally more **relaxed** at rest.



Pick the option that works for you

- Accommodation**
Support posture in available range
 - Therapeutic positioning**
Correction | learning to lie straight
 - Able to lie straight**
Maintain new improved position | less equipment
- Pick best time of day
Start with small changes

Even 2 hours is beneficial
2 hours x 365 days
= 730 hours = **30 days**



Benefits

Better Sleep
(less waking with pain or thermoregulation issues)

Better nights mean better days
(less stiff - easier care)

Flexible
(Use as much or as little as can tolerate)

Family friendly

Portable

Body relaxed - more pliable - reduced tone

Improved shape and range

Passive stretch therapy



“**P**ostural care has improved his health and wellbeing. The cost savings are also clear as it has meant a reduction of recurrent pressure sores, better reflux management, reduced chest infections and reduced pain, meaning there is less need for medication and hospital admissions. He has also needed less staff input for his behaviour, which had become challenging due to the pain he was in. The need for spinal surgery, which can be very expensive, has been reduced too.”

- Health professional discussing 40 year old using night-time positioning

Frequently Asked Questions

Who needs a sleep system?

As a rule of thumb, anyone who cannot change position in bed voluntarily or only with great difficulty. There are many users with high tone and involuntary movement.

Which position is best to lie in?

Supine is the easiest position in which to achieve a supported symmetrical position. However not everyone will tolerate a sudden change. Also there are understandable concerns regarding airways. It may be that you can pick a time of the day when there is a higher level of supervision to spend time in supine and then when the family are asleep, use side lying. Likewise you may choose supine when clear of lung infection and side lying when there are problems. If in doubt, please discuss with a clinician.

What age groups can you cater for?

We work with early intervention, through to elderly care.

Is there a weight limit?

We haven't yet found anyone who needs the system who is too heavy for it.

Do I need to buy a whole system?

No, you can just buy the parts you need.

How long can someone lie in a Symmetrikit Sleep system?

Most sleep all night in the system, however it may take several months to get the best out of it. Some users may only tolerate it for a few hours at a time. However, even using it only 2 hours a night is a positive outcome as by the end of a year you would have achieved 730 hours of stretch therapy.

What if I need to turn someone?

If you are turning someone because they have woken up and are uncomfortable, then it is likely that improved support will lead to increased comfort and therefore less disturbances. If you are turning for pressure care or as part of a postural care programme, then you should continue doing so. You may find it easier to use Symmslyde.

Can I use Symmetrisleep on a dynamic "pressure mattress"?

Experience and recent studies with pressure monitors suggest that you can. However, with any new equipment make frequent inspections of the skin until you are comfortable that everything is OK. If later on there are changes (health, equipment, medication, continence, nutrition, etc.) then this should be reviewed.

Can I use Symmetrisleep when the back of the bed is raised?

Symmetrisleep can be used to stop someone falling to the side and to stop them sliding down the bed. Use medium rather than small brackets at the chest and use a knee block with the securing strap in place or use a small pillow under the gluteal crease and secured directly to the velcro. You can also use a V pillow behind the knees, secured with velcro to the receptor sheet.

What about tilting the whole mattress?

If the bed allows the mattress to be pivoted around a central point with the head higher than the feet (reverse Trendelenburg), this in fact allows for more options.

Can I use it on a "turning bed"?

We have used Symmetrisleep successfully on beds that slowly tilt from one side to another.

Referenced from www.symmetrikit.com's "Symmetrikit Postural Care : Symmetrisleep FAQ's (January 2014)"

Modular Components

