

Thinking about a pressure redistribution mattress?

This information guide explains the main types of pressure redistribution mattresses. It helps you choose a mattress that protects your skin and supports your daily activities. This can help you and your team decide which mattress is right for you.

What is a pressure redistribution mattress?

A pressure redistribution mattress spreads pressure across your body. This lowers the risk of skin breakdown when you spend long periods in bed.

How can a pressure redistribution mattress help you?

A pressure redistribution mattress can help with:

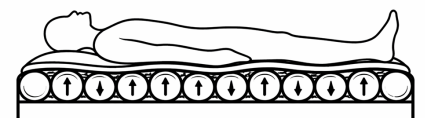
- Skin
 - » Spreads pressure across your body.
 - » Lowers the risk of skin breakdown.
- Function
 - » Helps you roll and sit up in bed.
 - » Helps with transfers.
 - » Helps with daily tasks such as dressing, eating and catheterising.
- Comfort
 - » Helps manage temperature.
 - » Helps reduce pain.

Types of pressure redistribution mattresses

Powered - alternating air

The mattress inflates and deflates air cells in a set cycle. This constantly changes pressure points.

Note: the first three to four cells under your head usually stay inflated.



Powered - combination and hybrid (air and foam)

This mattress type uses both foam and air. This can offer more stability compared to a full air mattress. They can be powered or non powered.



Non powered

This mattress type can be made of different materials like foam or gel. They provide a stable surface to help with moving around the bed, dressing, transfers and sexual activity. For these mattresses, you usually must be able to move around the bed by yourself to protect your skin and prevent pressure injuries. Therefore, it may not suit people at higher risk of skin breakdown or who cannot reposition.

Questions to think about before meeting with your team to talk about getting a mattress.

Your current mattress

What do you like about it? What do you not like about it?

Skin

Have you had skin breakdown before? What parts of your body can you feel or not feel?

Activities

What do you need to do in bed? For example, transfers, managing bladder and bowels, dressing, sexual activity.

Size

What size mattress do you want and need? Do you sleep with someone else?

Your home

What mattress will work best in your home? Do you have reliable power? Do you feel hot or cold in bed? What space is available in your bedroom?

Choosing your pressure redistribution mattress?

This will help you to think about how different mattresses can help your skin and support your daily activities. You and your team can use this to help choose the right mattress for you.

Features to consider

Powered mattress

Alternating cells ratios

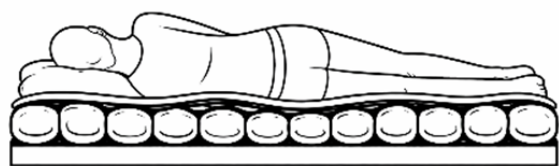
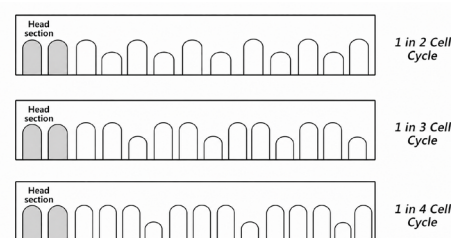
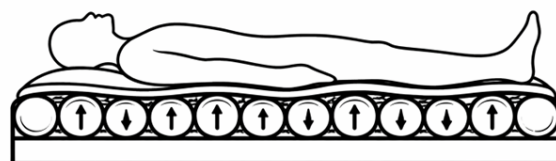
Air cells inflate and deflate in a set cycle.

May help with:

Relieving pressure for people at high risk of skin breakdown so your body has less pressure at one time.

Some types include:

- Different air cell ratios
 - » 1:2 mattress (every second cell deflates on a cycle).
 - » 1:3 mattress (every third cell deflates on a cycle).
 - » 1:4 mattress (every fourth cell deflates on a cycle).



Constant low pressure mode

You are able to switch from alternating air cells to a non moving surface, which applies constant low pressure to the body.

May help with:

- Bed mobility.
- Carer assistance.

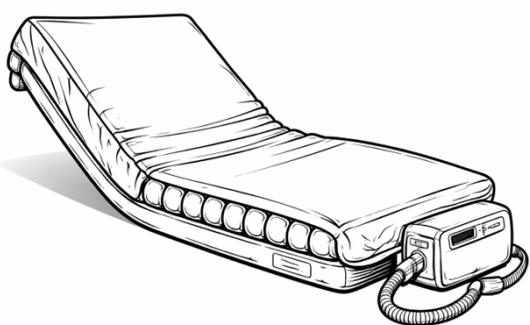
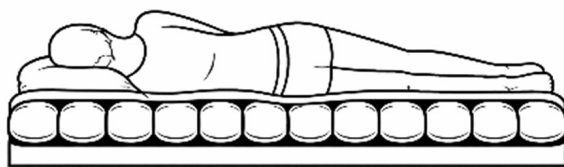
Constant max inflate mode

You are able to switch the air cells to inflate to their maximum level, creating a firmer and more stable surface.

May help with:

- Providing firm surfaces for transfers.
- Carer assistance.

Note: This mode is usually used for short periods only.



Fowler boost

Increases the amount of air under your bottom when sitting up. Some do this automatically.

May help with:

- Stopping you from making contact with the mattress base.
- Reducing risk of skin breakdown.

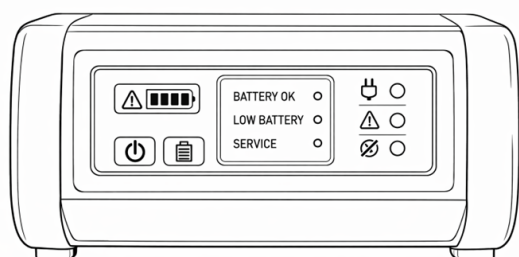
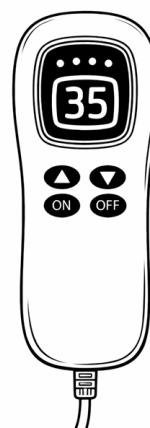
Remote for pump

Allows you to control the mattress settings.

May help with:

- Adjusting mattress settings without needing to reach for the pump.

Note: Very few mattresses have this feature.



Battery back up

Provides back up power if electricity stops.

May help with

- Keeping the mattress cycles working during power outages.

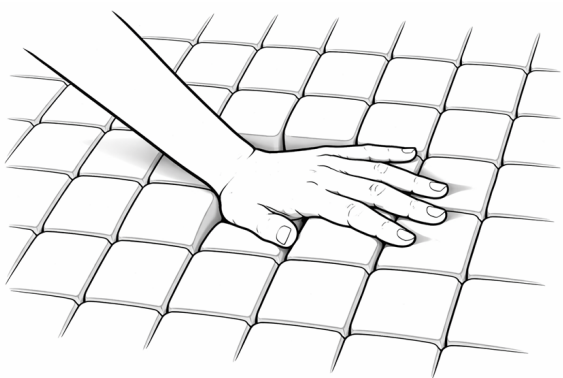
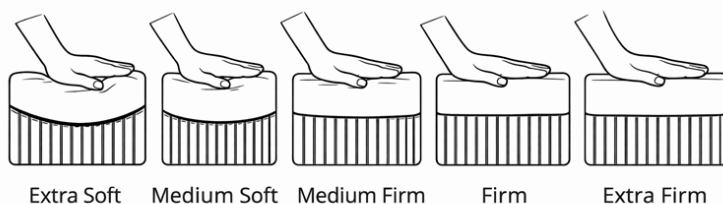
Non powered mattress

Firmness

Mattresses can come in different levels of firmness.

May help with:

- Softer mattresses may feel more comfortable but can make moving harder.
- Firmer mattresses may make transfers and bed mobility easier.



Grooved or “castellated” foam

Foam with small slits or grooves across the surface.

May help with:

- Spreading pressure.
- Letting the mattress bend more easily.

Note: May leave marks on sensitive skin.

Materials

A mattress can come in different materials, such as gel, foam or both. The best material for you may depend on climate and humidity.

May help with:

- Maintaining your preferred temperature.
- Managing sweat.



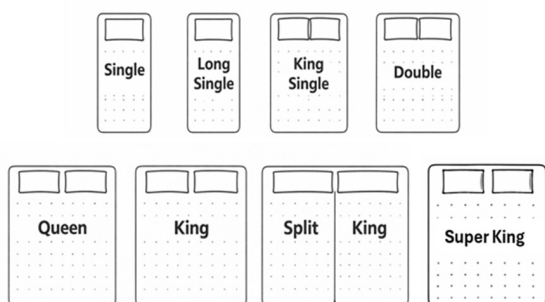
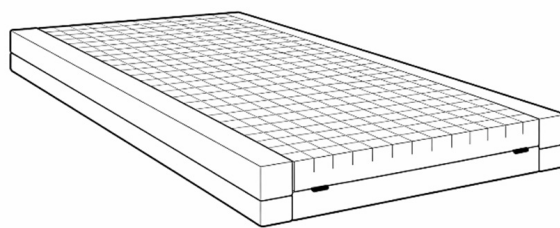
General mattress features

Reinforced edges

A firm border along the edge of the mattress.

May help with:

- Bed transfers.
- Sitting on the edge of the bed.



Size of mattress

Mattresses come in different sizes.

May help with

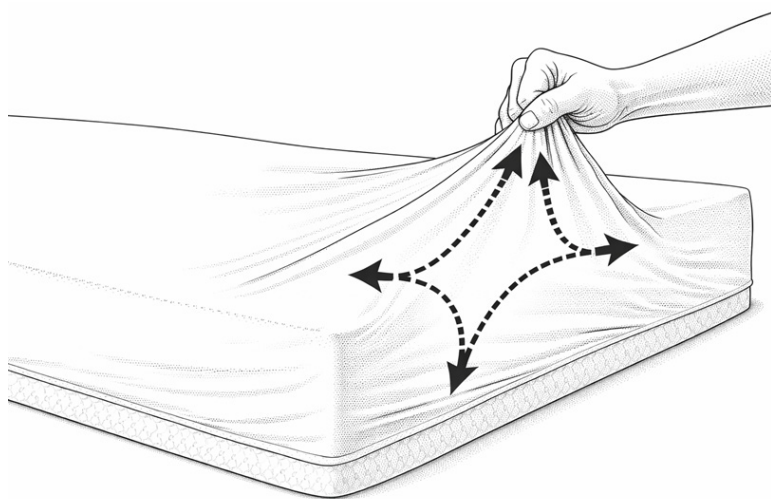
- Making daily activities, such as dressing, stretching and positioning easier.
- Allowing you to sleep next to someone else.

Special mattress cover

A cover that is made of stretchy, breathable and water resistant material.

Can help with:

- Preventing skin breakdown by allowing you to sink into the mattress.
- Keeping you warm.
- Protecting the mattress from fluids or bacteria.



If you have any questions about pressure redistribution mattresses, talk to your Occupational Therapy.

Image reference: chatgpt.com