



How to Conduct a Telehealth Wheelchair Assessment

A Practical Guide for Occupational Therapists

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What you can do to optimise your assessment

- **Human and communication factors:**
 - **Support person:** Organise the appointment so that a paraprofessional (friend, relative, support worker etc) will be with your client to assist with the measurements. The most ideal scenario would be a physiotherapist.
 - **Placement:** Encourage client and support person to be in view of camera throughout session
 - **Swap photos:** Send reference photos to support person and receive asynchronous images of client to inform postural assessment
 - **Timing:** Sometimes a pause longer than usual is required after asking a question due to audio delay. Be aware and avoid talking at the same time. Consider your audience and how much time they will need to process information and complete the measurements.
- **Environmental and equipment factors**
 - **Lighting:** Client and clinician locations should have adequate lighting
 - **Sound:** The microphone should be located near the client. A separate microphone, to be attached to the clothing of the client, should be considered.
 - **Clothing:** Consider contrast in clothing for visual ease e.g. light coloured wall, dark coloured wheelchair, light coloured clothing
 - **Tape measure:** Have a tape measure to demonstrate to the paraprofessional of how to measure
 - **Assessment:** Have your assessment document printed and repopulated where possible

(Fichten and Lefebvre, 2004)

Helping get your client and support person ready

Tips for clients/ support person prior to the session

- **Device:** The therapist may request the support person to move the device around to see different angles of the client therefore an Iphone or Ipad may be easier to use in this case if available
- **Clothing:** It is suggested that the client wears a contrast colour to the wheelchair, chair or wall that they are sitting against for tele-wheelchair assessment
 - For example: Client wears white whilst sitting in black wheelchair against white wall
- **Sound:** Please test your microphone on your device prior to the session and if it is not working please notify the therapist. Please remember that during the appointment you may move away from your microphone so it is important to have a loud voice and check with your therapist if they can hear you
- **Lighting:** It is suggested to use a well lit room with natural lighting e.g. facing the window rather than having the window behind you
- **Set up:** It is suggested to use an open space so that the client is free to move around the room to show the OT different angles of the client's body or wheelchair. Please also place the device about 1-2 metres away from the client so as to see the whole body
- **Tape measure:** It will be useful to have a tape measure with you

Helping get your client and support person ready

Wheelchair parts:

Your client and or support person may not know the parts of the wheelchair and you may need to ask them some questions. It can be helpful to send them a copy of a diagram of a powered and manual wheelchair for reference

Power wheelchair:



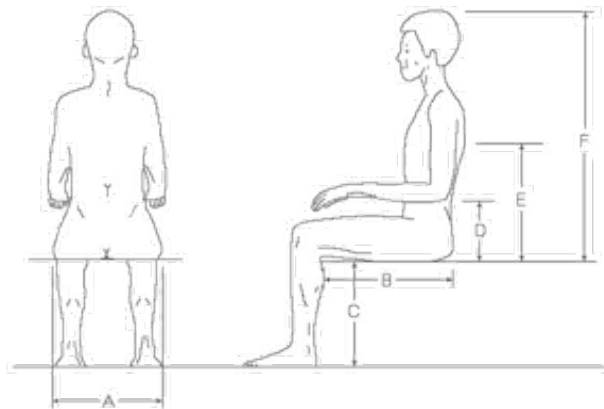
Manual wheelchair:



Helping get your client and support person ready

What the assessment looks like: It

can be helpful for the client and or support person to familiarise themselves with the assessment as you may ask them to help with the measurements



Seat width (A):

- Measure hips or widest part of thighs.
- Holding two clipboards/books against each side of the wheelchair user can help in obtaining an accurate measurement.

Seat depth (B):

- Place a clipboard/book at the back of the wheelchair user to help get an accurate measurement.
- Measure from the back of the pelvis to the back of the knee in a straight line.
- Always measure both legs. If there is a difference between the two legs, check that the wheelchair user is sitting up with the pelvis level.
- If there is still a difference, make the wheelchair prescription for the shorter side

Seat height (C):

- Measure from the back of the knee to the base of the heel.
- Make sure the wheelchair user's ankles are bent at 90 degrees (if possible).
- Always measure both legs.

Armrest height (D):

- Measure the seat to the bottom of the rib cage.
- To help find the bottom of the rib cage, place hands on both sides of the pelvis.
- Gently squeeze hands inwards and slide hands upwards. The bottom of the rib cage is just above the waist.

Backrest height (E):

- Measure from the seat to the bottom of the shoulder blade in a vertical line.
- To help find the bottom of the shoulder blade, ask the user to shrug their shoulder

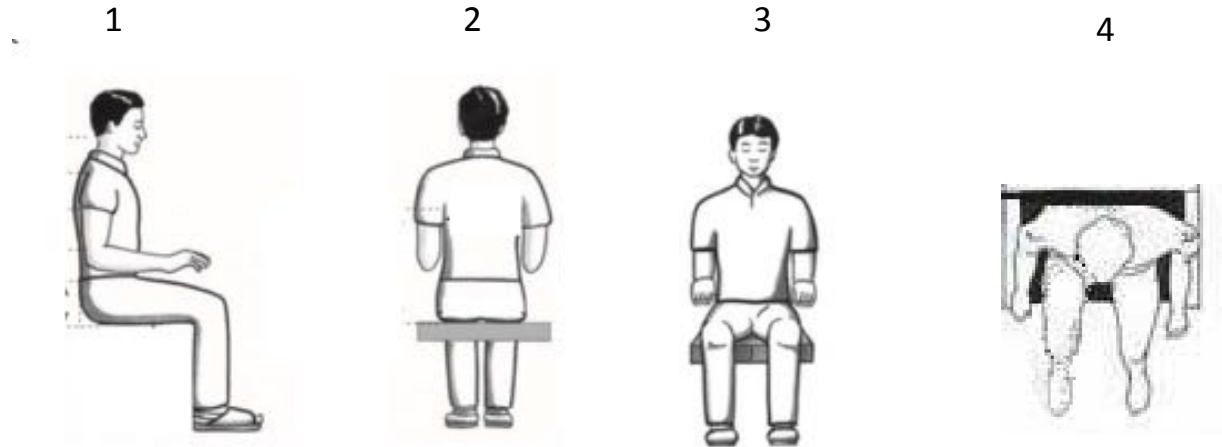
Height to top of head (F):

Helping get your client and support person ready

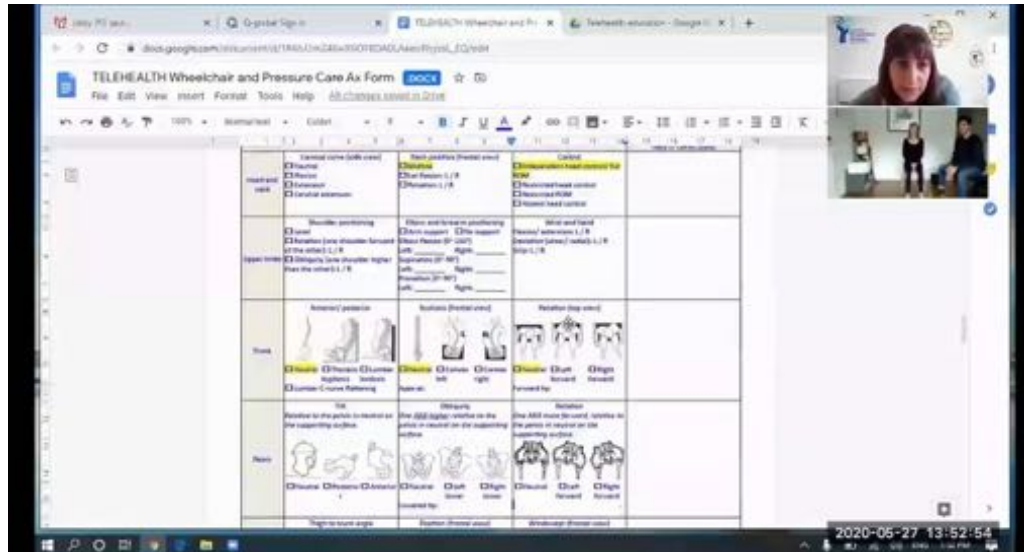
Reference photos:

If possible, please send 4 photos to your therapist prior to the sessions

1. Client side on sitting on a stool or chair
2. Client sitting on stool or chair with back to the camera
3. Client facing camera on chair or stool
4. Image of client from above head in order to see hip / pelvis placement



What it looks like: An educational video on how to conduct a postural assessment



<https://independent-rehab.com.au/how-to-conduct-a-telehealth-wheelchair-assessment/>

What it looks like: An educational video on how to consult remotely for wheelchair fitting



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Contact

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Independent Rehabilitation Services



IRS is a multidisciplinary specialist Allied Health Service dedicated to maximising client independence and community participation.

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