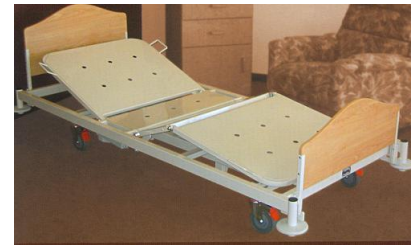


## Sleeping - adjustable beds

### What is an adjustable bed?



An **adjustable bed** can be moved through a range of different lying or sitting positions. Common adjustments include inclining the upper body and raising the lower body independently of each other. Other common features include bed-height adjustment, and tilting the bed to raise the upper body or the lower body. These features are called Trendelenburg (feet higher than head) and Reverse Trendelenburg (head higher than feet).

Adjustable beds are used in hospitals and are often used in homecare. Homecare beds are usually designed to match home furnishings. These beds are usually electrically operated, although manual or hydraulic models may be available.

Chronic health conditions such as acid reflux, a respiratory condition, lower back pain or leg swelling may be improved by use of an adjustable bed. This type of bed may also be more comfortable than a traditional flat bed. An adjustable bed may be recommended for a person recovering from surgery or a temporary illness.

Height adjustment and raising the upper body may assist a person to get out of bed with little or no assistance, depending on their medical condition.

When choosing an adjustable bed, make sure that it is compatible with transfer equipment such as a hoist, and other bed-related equipment.

Adjustable beds are on display at ILC Tas.

### Methods of operation

**Manual or mechanical** – *potential 'occupational health and safety' risks may need to be considered*

- The height adjustment is often operated by an attendant with a winding handle or foot pedal.
- The head elevation is manually adjusted by an attendant.
- These beds are no longer in common use but tend to be the cheapest option. However they require more effort and assistance from others than electrically operated beds.

**Hydraulic** - *potential 'occupational health and safety' risks may need to be considered*

- Usually operated with a foot pump by an attendant.

#### Electric

- User or attendant can operate, usually by pressing push-buttons on a handset (sometimes with pictures) for all adjustments.
- Alternative controllers such as a scanning or joystick device can be used by people who have difficulty pressing buttons.

**Load capacity** is the maximum occupant-weight recommended by the manufacturer for a product. It varies between beds. It is important for the occupant's safety that their weight is not greater than the load capacity. Beds with higher load capacities are available. Load capacity may also be written as SWL or load test. A kilogram (kg) weight is then provided.

## Adjustment options

**Height** – also referred to as 'Hi-Lo'. It raises and lowers the bed height to assist with:

- Getting in and out of bed.
- Transferring to and from a wheelchair at the same height as the bed.
- Making the bed.
- Minimising the risk of injury to a carer assisting a person in bed by enabling them to work at an optimal height. It should also encourage them to position their body safely and maintain good posture while working.
- Making transfers with a hoist easier.



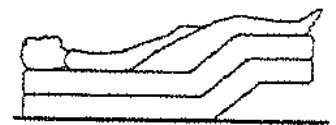
**Head elevation** – raises the head of the bed, supporting the person's back and head. It can assist with:

- Sitting up in bed with support.
- Getting out of bed.
- Changing position in bed to different angles.
- Alleviating back pain or reducing breathing difficulties.
- Supporting people while reading, watching TV, doing craft activities, eating and drinking.



### Leg elevation

- Elevates the lower legs for comfort.
- Assists with circulation and fluid drainage.
- May relieve lower back pain.



### Knee break

- Provides a leg elevation option.
- Supports the thighs on an angle.
- Keeps the lower legs elevated and parallel to the mattress.
- Helps prevent a person from sliding down in the bed.



### Trendelenberg or Reverse Trendelenberg

- Entire bed can be tilted towards the head or towards the feet.
- May assist with conditions such as hypotension (low blood pressure), shock, medical procedures, circulation problems, breathing difficulties or reflux.



## Styles

- Ensemble-style beds with head and leg elevation and knee break but usually without the hi-lo option to change the bed height.
- Hospital-style adjustable beds with timber or metallic frames. Have space underneath for a hoist and may have the option of foot and head boards, giving them a more domestic look.



## Size

- Available in single, king single, double, queen and king sizes.
- Another option is two singles placed alongside each other, adjusted separately.



## Mattress

- Needs to be able to allow the bed to be adjusted.
- Usually made of foam, latex or air. Some custom spring mattresses can also be flexible enough to be used.
- Pressure care mattresses and overlays are also available. Seeking advice from a health professional is recommended if this is required.

## Castors

- Larger castors will increase the clearance and manoeuvrability of the bed and the overall height of the bed.
- Castors are available with easy-to-operate brakes.

For information about mattresses, beds and bed-related equipment please refer to ILC Tas information sheets:

**Sleeping – mattresses and beds**

**Sleeping – bed equipment**

## Contact ILC Tas for more information



Ring **1300 885 886** to speak to a health professional



Visit our website [www.ilctas.asn.au](http://www.ilctas.asn.au) or email us at [ilc@ilctas.asn.au](mailto:ilc@ilctas.asn.au)



Make an appointment to visit our centre at 275 Wellington Street, South Launceston



Ring us to find out when we will be visiting your area

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