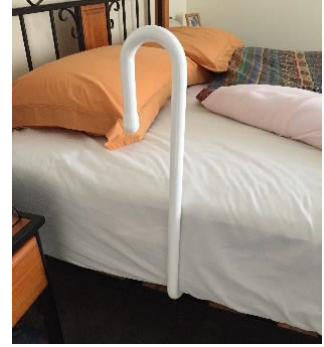


WHAT IS A BED STICK?

A bed stick (or bed pole) helps with moving from lying to sitting on the edge of the bed and back again. A bed stick can also be used to help with rolling in bed.

USING A BED STICK

The base of the bed stick slides under the mattress and the person pulls up on the curved 'stick' to move. A bed stick should only be used when the person is sitting or lying on the mattress. A bed stick should not be used to stop someone from rolling out of bed or to help him or her balance once standing.



RISKS WITH USING A BED STICK

A bed stick may be prescribed following an Occupational Therapy assessment. This is because of possible risks from either incorrect set up or use.

Risks can include:

- Becoming stuck (entrapment) or suffocation (asphyxiation): Bed sticks are not fixed to the bed. They rely on the weight of the mattress and the person to remain in position. A gap between the stick and the mattress can cause entrapment or asphyxiation if the person rolls out of bed and cannot free themselves.
- Falling and landing on the pole (impalement): Straight bed sticks are not recommended as these could cause impalement. We only recommended bed sticks with a return handle (curved or hook-shaped) to reduce the risk of injuries.



INSTALLING A BED STICK

1. Lift up the mattress and slide the base of the bed stick between the mattress and the bed base. *A thin flat piece of wood (ply board) on top of the wooden slats can provide a further stable base of support for the bed stick.*
2. Position the curved stick part of the bed stick between the person's hip and shoulder when lying in bed, in a position they can easily reach.
3. Ensure the stick is sitting firmly against the mattress with no gap.
 - Never tie or fix the bed stick to the bed frame (unless the bed stick has a clamp or fixation device built in).

MONITORING A BED STICK

Check the position of the bed stick daily to ensure the mattress or the bed stick has not moved or created a gap.

Remove the bed stick and contact the Occupational Therapist if:

- you notice the bed stick or mattress is moving frequently..
- the person's medical or physical condition changes (e.g., they are experiencing drowsiness, confusion, reduced strength in their arms, legs or body, reduced ability to call for assistance or move away from a dangerous position),
- the person changes type of bed (e.g., electric bed) or mattress (e.g., air mattress). Bed sticks described in this handout are not recommended for use with electric beds or air mattresses.

Your EPC Occupational Therapist: _____ Phone: 1300 130 813

