

General Guidelines for Sling Fitting/Sizing

- Clinical assessment and professional judgment are needed to determine the appropriate **FIT or SIZE** and **TYPE** of sling for each individual patient. The following is intended as a general guideline and points of reference to assist with assessment of fit/size once the appropriate type of sling has been determined.
- Selection of sling **TYPE** will depend on a number of factors such as medical condition, type of transfer task, amount of support required, etc.
- Assessment should be completed by appropriately trained staff
- Custom size slings may be required in some situations
- OT/PT can be consulted as required (e.g., patients with special considerations or issues such as amputation, poor fit, etc.).
- Some manufacturers may provide a weight range to serve as an approximate guide for sling fit (e.g., <100 lbs = small, 100-165 lbs = medium, 165-250 lbs = large, etc.). This will vary between manufacturers – refer to corresponding manufacturer guidelines and/or sling labels.
- 4 components to assess when sizing slings:
 - Height
 - Waist Size/Shoulder
 - Thigh Size
 - Manufacturer's Weight Recommendation per sling

HEIGHT

1. Assessing height with patient/resident lying down on the bed:

- Roll the patient/resident onto their side. Position the “u-shape” or apex of the horseshoe part of the sling at the level of the sacrum/coccyx and the line up the middle of the sling along the patient/resident’s spine.
- For standard shoulder high slings (e.g., BHM/Arjo Quick Fit sling):
 - o Determine where the patient’s shoulders are located relative to the shoulder attachment straps (at the connection to the body of the sling).
 - o If the shoulders are ABOVE the shoulder straps, a LARGER sling or head support may be required
 - o If shoulders are significantly BELOW the level of the shoulder straps (if patient/resident is small or thin-frame), a SMALLER sling may be required
- For high back slings (e.g., BHM/Arjo Hammock, Arjo Combi, Liko Highback), the top edge of the sling should be lined up between the top of the ear and the top of the head (or slightly above):
 - o Determine where the patient’s head is located relative to the top edge of sling material
 - o If the head is significantly ABOVE the top edge of the sling, a LARGER sling may be required
 - o If the top of the head is significantly BELOW the top edge of the sling, a SMALLER sling may be required. A fan-like projection above the patient’s

head is another indication that the sling is too big and a smaller sling may be required.

2. Assessing height with the patient/resident in a seated position:

- Hold the “u-shape” or apex of the horseshoe part of the sling. Place the sling behind the patient/resident until it touches the seat of the chair (at the level of the sacrum/coccyx) and then have the patient/resident lean back.
- Keep the “u-shape” or apex at the level of the sacrum/coccyx and gently pull the remainder of the sling upward until the sling is snug and as high as possible.
- For standard shoulder high slings (e.g., BHM/Arjo Quick Fit sling):
 - o Determine where the patient/resident’s shoulders are located relative to the shoulder strap attachments.
 - o If the shoulders are ABOVE the shoulder straps, a larger sling or head support sling may be required.
 - o If shoulders are significantly BELOW the level of the shoulder straps (if patient/resident is small or thin-frame), a smaller sling may be required
- For high back slings (e.g., BHM/Arjo Hammock, Arjo Combi, Liko Highback), the top edge of the sling should be lined up between the top of the ear and the top of the head (or *slightly* above):
 - o Determine where the patient’s head is located relative to the top edge of sling material
 - o If the head is significantly ABOVE the top edge of the sling, a LARGER sling may be required
 - o If the top of the head is significantly BELOW the top edge of the sling, a SMALLER sling may be required. A fan-like projection above the patient’s head is another indication that the sling is too big and a smaller sling may be required.

WAIST SIZE/SHOULDER SIZE

- After you have chosen the sling based on height assessment, apply the sling around the patient/resident. Ensure that the middle of the sling is centered down the patient/resident’s spine.
- Wrap sling material around the front of the patient’s shoulder area:
 - o If the sling material falls at the point where the shoulder meets the chest, the sling is sized appropriately
 - o If the strap material comes in contact with the shoulder/arm, the sling is too small and LARGER sling may be required
 - o If sling material overlaps the shoulder onto the chest or the material meets in the middle, the sling is too large and a SMALLER sling may be required
- If any part of the patient/resident’s body touches or falls outside the edge or ribbing of the sling, a larger size may be required to prevent skin abrasions and to minimize the risk of the patient/resident rolling out of the sling.

*** Trial a larger sling to see if it is appropriate or perhaps a modified custom sling may be required. ***

THIGH SIZE

- After assessing the waist fit of the sling, place the leg straps around the sides of the patient/resident's hips and legs and then under the thighs and cross the straps between each other.
- If the leg straps are correctly positioned, the material under the patient/resident's thighs should be the padded portion of the sling not the straps/loops.
- If the strap/loop portions of the sling are in contact with the patient/resident's thighs, a larger size sling or modified custom sling with longer leg straps may be required to prevent skin abrasions.

WEIGHT RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SLINGS

- Maximum lift and sling load may vary from different manufacturers. Please refer to specific lift and sling labels for the safe working load.

HELPFUL HINTS

- Generally, always fit the largest part of the patient/resident's body
- Assess sling fit, once the patient/resident is lifted up slightly in the lift:
 - Sling is fitted correctly if:
 - sling's lower edge ("u-shape" or apex of the horseshoe) is positioned at the patient/resident's sacrum/coccyx area
 - leg straps are comfortably placed and the padded portion of the leg straps are under the patient/resident's thighs
 - patient/resident's shoulders are approximately at the same height as the sling
 - Sling is too large if:
 - patient/resident's seat hangs down out of the sling
 - Sling is too small if:
 - leg supports chafe the thighs, groin or hip area
 - sling bar may come too close to the patient/resident's face
 - patient/resident's shoulders are well above the height of the shoulder strap attachments

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Manufacturer Websites:
 - www.liko.com/na/
 - www.arjohuntleigh.com/int/
 - www.guldmann.com