

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):
 - Determine where the patient/resident’s shoulders are located relative to the shoulder strap attachments.
 - If the shoulders are ABOVE the shoulder straps, a larger sling or head support sling may be required.
 - 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):
 - Determine where the patient’s head is located relative to the top edge of sling material
 - If the head is significantly ABOVE the top edge of the sling, a LARGER sling may be required
 - 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:
 - If the sling material falls at the point where the shoulder meets the chest, the sling is sized appropriately
 - If the strap material comes in contact with the shoulder/arm, the sling is too small and LARGER sling may be required
 - 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