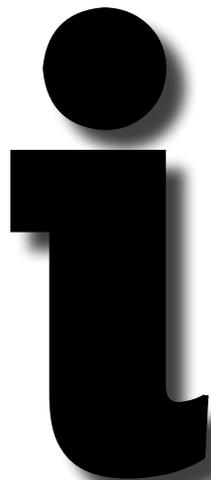


The Starlock Cushion (page 1 of 5)



Why do I need a Starlock cushion?

Your injury means that you may easily develop pressure marks and ulcers. You have been assessed as needing a specialist cushion to reduce the chance of this happening.

Your Starlock cushion

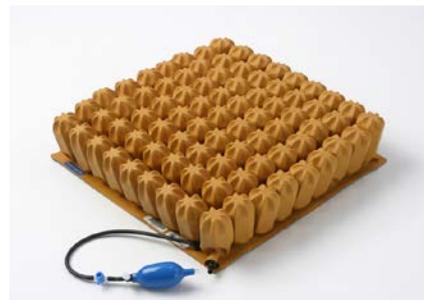
There are different types of Starlock cushions available, all are similar in construction.

The Spinal Centre uses the Starlock standard Contour cushion.

Starlock cushions are air-filled pressure relieving devices made with Neoprene rubber. They are adjusted by an air valve located at the front of the cushion.

The ability to isolate air flow between cells enhances stability and assists in transfers and overall posture.

Due to variations in the range of Starlock cushions we advise you not to use a different type of cushion until you have been assessed for its use. Please contact the staff at the Pressure Clinic who will be able to help.



If you need your information in another language or medium (audio, large print, etc) please contact Customer Care on 0800 374 208 or send an email to: customer care@salisbury.nhs.uk

You are entitled to a copy of any letter we write about you. Please ask if you want one when you come to the hospital.

If you are unhappy with the advice you have been given by your GP, consultant, or another healthcare professional, you may ask for a second (or further) opinion.

The evidence used in the preparation of this leaflet is available on request. Please email: patient.information@salisbury.nhs.uk if you would like a reference list.

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Before use

The cushion is supplied in a box which you should keep as you may need to return the cushion if there are any problems with it.

Hold the cushion by the edges or by the tag, not the cells as these can easily be punctured or repairs can be weakened. Do not carry the cushion by any of the air valves.

A pump and a puncture repair kit should be provided. Do not use any other type of pump as this will damage your cushion.

If you have an allergic reaction to the Starlock cushion, we advise you use an official outer cover at all times. An outer cover will increase the surface pressure on your skin, as it constricts the air cells inside the cover. Your cushion will therefore need readjusting and hand testing when an outer cover is used. Always check your skin for any signs of skin marking if using an outer cover.

Always replace worn or damaged covers. Replacement covers are available

Pressure Clinic
Tel 01722 429291

from your wheelchair service or the cushion supplier.

Daily checks

You need to check the cushion every day.

- If someone else is doing this for you, you will need to tell them how to do it and make sure that they do as you have told them.
- It is best not to wear a watch or rings with stones when checking the cushion as these can puncture the air cells. Long finger nails can also cause punctures.
- Remove the cover and check it for damage.
- Check that the main air valve is tightly closed, the cushion is inflated and there are no visible punctures (the puncture repair kit is explained later).
- Check the base of the air cells for signs of deterioration including discoloured patches or cracks in the rubber and that nothing has dropped down between the air cells.

Adjusting the cushion

The cushion must be adjusted to suit your individual needs. You should sit suspended 'in' the cushion and not 'on' top of it.

You must be confident in directing others on how to set and hand test the cushion correctly. You may be put at risk if you allow untrained professionals, family or carers to adjust the air valve or reset the cushion.

The main inflation valve is located at the front of the cushion.

To close the main air valve, hold the base of the valve stem with one hand while turning the valve clockwise with your other hand. Do not over tighten. To release air/open the valve, turn the valve anti-clockwise.

When inflating the cushion using the main air valve, move the blue lock of the inflation bulb to the open position and press the white button for approximately 3-5 seconds. This ensures that all the air is realised from the air pockets.

Allow 1 minute for the air to distribute throughout the cells.

Check that the cushion is correctly inflated by hand testing as you have been shown. The cushion works best when there is ½ to 1 inch of air between the cushion base and the lowest bony part of your bottom.

An under or over-inflated Starlock cushion can cause skin marking and development of pressure ulcers.

For a guide on how to set your cushion please refer to the following websites:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uSnu0pFR1QI&feature=youtube_gdata_player

<http://www.lowzone.co.uk/downloads/downloads.aspx>

If you have any queries about adjusting your Starlock cushion you can contact the Pressure Clinic, or your local wheelchair service for advice.

For patients admitted at the Spinal Centre, all types of Starlock cushions should only be adjusted by the Pressure Clinic staff. If in doubt please contact the Pressure Clinic on ext. 4291, and do not use your cushion until the matter has been resolved.

Lock pockets

The individual air cells ('lock pockets') can be adjusted to suit your requirements and are controlled by the inflation bulb pump and lock valve. This isolates the air flow moving from one air cell to another. When fully closed this provides maximum stability and support.

Locate the attached inflation bulb pump (kept in a pouch, attached to the outer cover at the front).

On the bulb pump there is a white air release button and a blue lock valve. The lock is encased in clear plastic to view its required position. When the small hole is visible, the lock is closed and this restricts the airflow in each individual cell.

When you are positioned correctly, pump the attached bulb pump until the pump becomes firm (generally 12 – 15 times). This fully inflates the lock pockets, trapping the air in each individual cell.

When the required position/inflation is achieved, turn the blue lock to the closed position and place the bulb back into the pouch provided.

Recheck inflation of the cushion by hand testing. If necessary readjust by using the white button first, followed by the main air valve to release air.

When the 'lock pockets' are used, the cushion will become firmer in appearance and this can raise the interface pressure on your bony prominences, promoting skin damage.

This must be taken into consideration and monitored closely when using this cushion.

If you have any queries or concerns please do not hesitate to contact Pressure Clinic.

Using the cushion

We advise you not to store items under or to the side of your cushion as this could create a higher seating pressure. Sharp objects may puncture the air cells. Should this happen you must contact your wheelchair service or your cushion supplier immediately.

You must be aware of other factors that can cause punctures. These include:

- hot cigarette ash and cigarette lighters
- pets e.g. cats and dogs
- keys kept under or around the cushion
- sharp objects.

It is essential that you place Starlock cushion the correct way round on your wheelchair. The main air valve/inflation bulb should be visible at the front of the cushion to make it accessible when adjusting the cushion. The outer cover has a carry handle at the front, however the Starlock cushion has no descriptive labels on the underside to help you correctly position it.

If using an outer cover ensure that the cushion is inserted the correct way inside the cover (and

not back to front or upside down). The zipper must be placed at the back, with all the air valves still visible outside of the cover. Placing the complete assembled cushion the wrong way round can cause significant skin damage.

It is at the discretion of your cushion supplier if a spare outer cover is provided.

Exposing the Starlock cushion to extreme heat, such as direct sunlight, open fires or radiators can perish the rubber of the cushion.

There is no maximum user weight for these types of cushions.

Your skin can be badly damaged if the cushion is not used properly.

Cleaning your cushion

Clean the cushion with warm water and detergent, (the main air valve must be closed when cleaning).

You need to make sure that areas between the cells are clean.

Do not use strong substances such as bleach or alcohol based products or lotions when cleaning your cushion.

Be careful when wiping dry between the air cells as any repair patches may become dislodged from the cells. If possible always allow it to dry naturally.

The outer cover can be machine washed on a 40°C wash cycle with mild detergent. Do not use bleach. It should be drip dried or tumble dried on a cool setting to prevent shrinkage. Washing instructions are on the label.

Punctures

If you suspect a puncture or your cushion is deflated, over-inflate the cushion and place into water, with all valves closed, to find and repair the puncture.

If your cushion has a puncture, do not sit on it until it has been repaired. You are likely to develop skin ulcers if you sit on a punctured cushion.

A puncture repair kit with repair instructions is provided with the cushion. If you need more patches or glue, or cannot repair the puncture, contact wheelchair services immediately.

General information about the cushion

No latex has been used in making this product.

Travelling in an aeroplane will effect the pressure within the Starlock cushion, and over-inflate the air cells. You may need to let a little air out before take off. Always reset your cushion as soon as possible after landing.

This cushion must not be placed on a car seat, as sudden or sharp braking may cause you to slide off your cushion. The cushion will not maintain your balance when going round corners.

If you are travelling in your chair, when in a vehicle, always ensure that you are secured correctly with a harness.

Do not use an alternative cover on the cushion e.g. a pillow case, as this will effect the efficiency

of the cushion, and can cause skin marking.

Pressure relief

You may need to carry out pressure relief on this cushion. If you are not sure whether you need to do this, please contact the Pressure Clinic.

Pressure relief helps to keep the blood flowing in your seating area. This is necessary for healthy skin and helps prevent ulcers forming.

Pressure is relieved when the bony parts of your bottom are lifted clear from the cushion. To do this you can lift your bottom off the seat or lean side to side or forward and then back. If possible relieve the pressure every 20 minutes for 20 seconds.

Skin

You should check your skin for any skin damage before getting into your wheelchair and on going back to bed. When in bed, if you have any red or pink marks on your skin, you will need to relieve pressure from the area until the mark has completely faded. If the mark is still there after 30 minutes, please contact the Pressure Clinic for advice.

New cushions are firmer than older ones, so you need to check your skin as often as possible when you get a new one.

Life expectancy of the cushion and how to replace it

The Starlock cushion should last between 3-5 years, or longer if looked after and maintained properly, but this can vary depending on your weight and how active you are.

The cushion is guaranteed for 2 years from manufacturing defects.

To repair or replace your cushion, contact your local wheelchair service or supplier.

If you are unsure of their address, please contact the staff at the Pressure Clinic who will be able to help.

How can the Pressure Clinic help?

We are available by telephone for advice. You will come to the Pressure Clinic during your Outpatient appointment when you see your consultant.

If you want additional appointments to be seen in the Pressure Clinic please contact us.

Contact us for addresses and telephone numbers of local wheelchair services, sales representatives for cushions, and for advice on any aspect of your pressure area care.

Pressure Clinic – 📞 01722 429291

Please remember that this hand-out is only to be used as a guide and that each person needs to be individually assessed for a cushion. Once a cushion is prescribed it does not reduce the need for skin checking and continued assessment.