



The Varilite Evolution Cushion (1 of 6)

Why do I need a Varilite Evolution 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 Varilite Evolution Cushion

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

The Varilite Evolution cushion uses inflated air and moulded foam to provide you with a lightweight and durable cushion.

The air and foam combination gives stability and good weight distribution whilst helping overall positioning and support.



The Varilite Evolution cushion is made up of three main parts;

- A solid air and foam base unit. There is an air valve at the front of the cushion which releases air to let you sink into the foam. The foam therefore moulds to your body shape, and your body weight is distributed over the surface of the cushion.
- A 2-inch tapered foam wedge which sits underneath the front of the base to help weight bearing on the seating area. A contoured positional wedge may also be used.
- An outer cover for protection and handling.

A solid wooden base can also be used with this type of cushion

Due to variations in the range it is advisable not to use a different type of Varilite cushion until you have been assessed for its use.

Please contact the staff at the Pressure Clinic who will be able to help.

The air valve

Two types of air valve are available to inflate and adjust the cushion:

- The pressure setting valve (PSV) - a valve which controls (restricts) the amount of air released from the cushion. The PSV is marked with three pre-set positions, labelled '1', '2' and '3', which can be seen through the indicator window on the air valve. The least

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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.

Please complete The Friends & Family Test to tell us about your experience at: www.salisbury.nhs.uk/FriendsFamily or download our App from the Apple App store or Google Play Store.

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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- amount of air is released when the number '1' appears in the Indicator window. More air is released, and your bottom will sink further into the cushion, when the valve is open to positions '2' and '3'. As a rule of a thumb the PSV air valve setting is set to number '1' for a person with a bony bottom, and set to number '3' for a well-covered bottom.
- The PSV air valve is designed to detect that the desired level of immersion has been achieved and stops the release of airflow. This is only a temporary restriction on the amount of air released from the cushion and will depend on the pre-set number in the indicator window. The air valve will need to be closed fully to prevent further air from escaping from the cushion.
- The traditional 2 way valve, which releases all the air from the cushion. The air flow is controlled by opening and closing the valve.

Please see How to Adjust and Set Your Cushion for more information.

Before using your cushion

- Always hold the cushion by the handle at the front or by the base.
- Always treat the air valves with care. Rough handling may damage the valve and prevent you being able to use the cushion.
- To provide sufficient padding under your bottom and prevent "Bottoming Out", the cushion must be inflated and adjusted. This will help prevent skin marking and pressure ulcers developing.
- Setting and Adjusting the Varilite Evolution cushion will depend on the type of air valve supplied with the cushion. The cushion must be reset each time you get onto your wheelchair.
- Failure to leave the air valve open overnight will prevent the cushion from inflating fully, and in time affect the pressure relieving properties / expected life span of the cushion.
- Should you suspect a puncture, get off the cushion, fully inflate it and close the air valve. Transfer back onto the cushion. If the cushion deflates with the air valve closed there is a puncture. Do not put the base unit in water, to check for leaks because this will damage the cushion
- To find the puncture, remove the cover, fully inflate the foam base and close the air valve. Immerse the base in clean water, i.e. sink or bath, and look for any air bubbles coming from the puncture.
- Contact your local Wheelchair Services or cushion supplier immediately to request a repair kit or replacement cushion.
- Repair kits are only available from the manufacturer of the Varilite Evolution cushion and are only obtained by contacting the cushion provider.

How to adjust and set your cushion

To adjust your Varilite Evolution cushion using the PSV air valve you should;

- Start with the cushion fully inflated. To inflate it, open the air valve by turning it anti-clockwise. The air valve will “suck” air into the cushion and the cushion will become firmer.
- Close the air valve by turning it clockwise, and sit on the cushion.
- Open the valve by turning it anti-clockwise until the pre-set number setting appears in the indicator window. Air will escape until the valve automatically shuts off the air flow.
- Once the valve has shut off the release of air, close the air valve by turning it clockwise. This will prevent any more air from escaping from the cushion when relieving pressure, shifting your body weight or when the wheelchair is being pushed.
- Do not release all the air from the cushion, by turning the PSV fully open, as this will put you at risk of ‘bottoming out’ and can lead to skin damage.
- When you have finished with the cushion for the day, open the air valve by turning it anti-clockwise. This allows the cushion to rest fully inflated with the air valve open overnight.
- Do not use the cushion if you suspect a fault with the air valve. Contact your local Wheelchair Services or cushion supplier of the immediately for advice.

To adjust your Varilite Evolution cushion using the traditional two way valve you should;

- Start with the cushion fully inflated. To inflate, open the air valve by turning it anti-clockwise. The air valve will “suck” air into the cushion and the cushion will become firmer.
- Close the air valve by turning it clockwise, and sit on the cushion.
- Open the valve by turning it slowly anti-clockwise to release the airflow. Listen for a change of pitch of the airflow and close the air valve by turning it clockwise. The air level is determined by the amount of support or stability you need as well as comfort.
- Do not release all the air from the cushion, as this will put the user at risk of bottoming out of the cushion and can lead to skin damage.
- Closing the air valve prevents any more air from escaping from the cushion when relieving pressure, shifting your body weight or the wheelchair is being pushed.
- When you have finished with the cushion for the day, open the air valve by turning it anti-clockwise. This allows the cushion to rest fully inflated with the air valve open overnight.

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

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that they do it correctly. You may be put at risk if you allow untrained professionals, family or carers to adjust the valve or reset the cushion.

Always check for loss of shape, wear and compression.

If using the tapered wedge make sure that it is correctly positioned underneath the base, inside the outer cover, with the thickest part of the wedge against the front of the cover.

To insert the wedge or contoured base: open the air valve, sit on the foam base unit and squeeze out as much air as possible.

Close air valve and place the cushion into the outer cover.

Insert the wedge or contoured base and when in position, open the air valve to inflate the cushion again.

A descriptive label is underneath the contour positional base to help with assembly.

The solid seat base is designed to help the lifespan of cushion and overall posture by minimising the sagging of the foam base when the cushion is used on foldable wheelchair bases.

This must be removed if used on a flat base as it can increase the interface pressure to your seating bones, causing skin damage and promote instability.

Using your cushion

- Once you have finished checking or cleaning the cushion, you will need to put it back together carefully. There are labels on the foam base unit to help you with this.
- It is essential that you place the Varilite Evolution cushion the correct way round on your wheelchair. The outer cover has a carry handle at the front, zippers at the back, and descriptive labels on the front of the cover so you can place it correctly before using it.
- The air valve must be visible at the front of the cushion so you can reach it to adjust it.
- Do not place an alternative cover on the cushion e.g. a pillow case, as this will affect the efficiency of the cushion, and can cause skin marking.
- It is best to use a larger size outer cover if a contoured positional wedge is used.
- A waterproof outer cover is also available for this cushion.
- It is at the discretion of your cushion supplier if a spare outer cover is provided.
- Travelling in an aeroplane will affect the pressure inside the Varilite Evolution cushion and over-inflate the foam base. You may need to let a little air out of the cushion before take off.
- Always reset your cushion as soon as possible after landing.
- There is no maximum user weight for these cushions.
- Your skin can be badly damaged if the cushion is not used properly.

Caring for your cushion

- Do not expose your cushion to naked flames or long periods of high or low temperatures.
- We advise you not to store items under or to the side of your cushion as this could create a higher seating pressure, and lead to pressure marks or ulcers.
- Sharp objects may puncture the foam base. If this happens you must contact your wheelchair service or your cushion supplier immediately.
- The cushion has been designed to be used with the outer cover for maximum efficiency. If the cover is damaged, it must be replaced.

Cleaning your cushion

Make sure the cover is turned inside out and the zipper closed before cleaning.

The outer cover can be machine washed on a 40°C wash cycle with mild detergent. It should be drip dried or tumble dried on a cool setting to prevent shrinkage. Washing instructions are on the label.

The air / foam base can be cleaned with a damp cloth and normal household detergent and wiped dry. Check that the air valve is closed before immersing the foam base in water,

If the tapered base or contoured positional wedge becomes soiled due to incontinence it must be replaced as it cannot be cleaned.

Contact your wheelchair services or cushion provider for a replacement.

Never use bleach, alcohol products or oil-based lotions to clean any parts of your cushion, as they can damage it.

Dry the cushion in open air. Do not place it in direct sunlight or in front of fires, radiators or heaters.

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 from 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.

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

Life expectancy of the cushion and how to replace it.

If maintained daily the Varilite Evolution cushion should last between 2 – 3 years, 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 Pressure Clinic help?

We are available by telephone for advice, and you will also attend the Pressure Clinic during your Outpatient appointment to see your consultant.

Additional appointments can also be made for you to be seen in the Pressure Clinic should you so wish.

We can be contacted for addresses and telephone numbers of local wheelchair services, sales representatives for cushions, and for advice on any aspect of your pressure area care.

Please remember that this information 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.