

SYMMETRIC DESIGNS FREE FORM SEATING

Frequently Asked Questions

What is Free Form?

Free Form is a modular, dynamic array that can be shaped into any configuration for a custom moulded seating system. It is infinitely adjustable and can grow and adapt to client's needs. It is provided as a kit (everything needed for custom back support) or as a sheet for configuring into your own customized system. Custom shapes are also available.

Can it be changed?

Yes. Free Form can be infinitely and widely adjusted, in shape and size. It can be adjusted for weight fluctuations and more modules can be added to accommodate growth. If the fit isn't ideal, it can be adjusted until it is.

What is it made of?

The clamps are aluminum, the centre screw is stainless steel and the two balls and edge balls are composite material that is extremely durable. The shell or array has a small amount of flex (dynamic movement) that also dampens vibration.

Is there a cover?

A cover is supplied with Back Kits. Free Form can be covered with any material you like. Foam, gel, air can be used to pad the shell and any covering material such as air mesh, Lycra, Dartex can be used. It will be up to the clinician and fitter to determine the most appropriate material for the client.

Is there a weight limit?

No. Free Form by itself is strong and has some flex to dampen vibration and give dynamic feedback. For clients with high tone, the flex will absorb movement and come back to the initial shape. The shell can be rigidified with aluminum stays or aluminum 2-Balls if desired. More stability for large systems can be achieved by adding extra Independent Mounts.

How do you adjust it?

Each clamp has a hex screw that loosens the grip of the clamp. When loosened, the shell or array can be contoured. Tighten it back up and it becomes rigid. The hex key is included with each system. A power drill can also be used to quickly tighten the shell.

Is it heavy?

Free Form is a material that can be used in a large or small configuration. The weight depends on the amount of modules and mounting. A medium size back weighs 2 kg (4.4 lbs). For a custom back support or full body system, the weight is comparable with other custom moulded systems.

Why would I use Free Form rather than ABS, foam-in-place or any other custom moulded seating system?

Free Form enables you to carry out unlimited number of times of adjustments in wide-ranging shapes and sizes. It can grow with the client. It can be adjusted to meet changing a wide range of postural needs. It does not wear out.

Can it be recycled and reused?

Free form seating is an environmentally friendly seating solution. Besides having a long product life, it can be recycled. It can be disinfected and used for multiple clients to create a custom fitted seating system.

Is the product cost-effective?

Free Form Seating is very cost effective. It has open air flow for heat and moisture dissipation. Fit and pressure can be checked directly through the shell. It can be covered with the most appropriate material for your client. It is flexible and dynamic for clients with high tone. It reduces labour through fitting time and fewer assessments and appointments. Only one tool is needed to adjust the shell. A custom system can be made in the same day as the initial assessment. No mess. No carving. No digitizing. No shape capture. Fewer transfers. Less wait time. Nothing to ship back to the manufacturer.

What type of clients is it used with?

Any client that would benefit from a system that gives even pressure distribution, requires off-loading of an area of compromised skin integrity, clients with high tone, low tone, Pediatric clients that need a system that will grow, clients with a kyphosis, scoliosis, or any type of unique shape. Free Form is a material that can be configured to everybody's needs, and then reconfigured. Keep checking our "gallery page" for examples of different configurations.

What other uses are there?

Free Form can be used for a contoured (and corrective) sleep system shell, custom headrests, arm troughs and any other positioning requirements. The only limit is your imagination.

Is there a warranty?

Yes. We warranty Free Form shell components for 5 years. The covers are warranted for 1 year.

What is the return policy?

30 days. Just pay the shipping.

How does it mount to a wheelchair and does it fit any wheelchair?
The Wheelchair Clamps fit a wide range of tube diameters and shapes. We have two types of mounts, the Centre Mount for backrests and the Independent Mounts for all other purposes. They are quick release and provide a completely rigid interface between frame and shell. There are also Surface Mounts and Flat Plate Mount Adapters for use on wheelchairs without back canes.

Can a Free Form system be mounted on other seating devices?

Free Form systems have also been fitted on stroller bases and commodes.

Can Free Form be used for corrective seating?

Yes. Because Free Form can be repeatedly adjusted and re-adjusted to the desired shape and contour, it can be used to gradually and progressively correct non-fixed deformities over an unlimited period.

Does the client feel the little pieces? Is it comfortable?

If it is fitted correctly, no individual pieces should be felt. The shell will give even load distribution (or proper off-loading if that is the goal) and is covered with whatever material is appropriate for the client. Even without a cover, if it is fitted evenly, people typically don't feel being pressed by the individual clamps.

Is it easy to adjust?

If you can turn a hex key (Allen key), then you can adjust the Free Form shell to the desired shape and contour.

How do I fit it?

Free Form comes pre-torqued to allow it to be shaped by hand into the desired configuration. For a full body system, it can be configured and mounted in the wheelchair before the client is transferred into it. Pre-configuration is done based on their measurements. It can then be adjusted once they have been transferred into it. Use a non-permanent marker to mark excess clamps that can be removed and make note of where clamps should be added for more surface area. A reverse mould can also be used if a shape capture is necessary. Backrests can be fitted with the client in the wheelchair.

How do I know if it is fitted correctly?

Check directly through the shell to see and feel if contact is made or if there is excess pressure. Pressure mapping can be used. Skin checks for redness should always be done and the system should be fitted by a qualified clinician and or seating technician.

Can I mount a headrest, shoulder harness, and other positioning components?

Yes. Extended screws allow for mounting of a headrest plate, clamps and clips directly to the outside of the shell. Symmetric Designs offers a good selection of headrests of high quality.

Do the laterals swing-away?

No. The shell is fixed in place once tightened. However, a swing away lateral can be mounted to the back post of the wheelchair.

Does it loosen over time?

No. There is no maintenance required. The steel screw binds to the aluminum clamps and does not loosen. In our initial trials and testing it has not loosened. We have trialled it with young active users in power wheelchairs and monitored the integrity of the shell closely. Over 3 years of extensive use, the shell has remained in the same configuration as the initial fitting. We do recommend monitoring both the seating system and the client's skin with frequent checks.

Who makes the cover and padding for a full body system?

This is the responsibility of the fitter. We do not make full body system covers.

However, we do make custom covers for custom configured backs. We will coordinate with you to use your desired cover material and foam type. All

we require are pictures. We can then replicate the system in our factory, make a custom cover, send you images of the completed cover to ensure satisfaction, then with your approval, ship the finished cover to you.

