

Using an Air Cushion

Air cushions are typically vinyl cushions which are inflatable.

They are placed on chairs or on the floor for children and adults alike to sit on.

The amount of air in them can readily be altered as required.

They come in round styles as well as slightly wedged versions. The difference being that the wedged option assists slightly in promoting a more upright seated posture by providing a slight tilt to the pelvis.

WHY would you use an air cushion?

- To assist with self regulation by providing subtle movement input to the body for children and adults, without them having to leave their chairs. These cushions essentially help to get the "wiggles" out; allowing for increased attention and focus to the task at hand.
- Wedged cushions provide postural support and promote a more upright posture through pelvic tilt.

WHO needs an air cushion?

- Children and adults who present with slightly low tone and would benefit from some postural support.
- Children and adults who seek movement and find it difficult to sit still and focus. They are particularly beneficial to such children within a class environment, but can also be used at home at the dinner table or when completing homework.

HOW do you use an air cushion?

- Make sure they are not overinflated as this can provide too much movement and become tiring or distracting for the person (see images).
- Be aware that children may become fatigued after long stretches on an air cushion; they are getting a subtle work out, after all. So children may need a rest break from sitting on them. They may be best used during specific teaching opportunities such as handwriting time.
- Be flexible: you can use them as a foot stool by resting your feet upon them. Suddenly you have a moveable surface for feet to rest on; allowing for lower limb movements

WHEN would you use an air cushion?

- Any time when seated. This might be at a school desk, an office chair or at the dining table
- For younger children in school, an air cushion can be a useful tool for mat time. They can assist in designating a place to sit; for those little ones who squirm about and lean on their classmates

Other considerations:

- When using a cushion, especially during the school day, you should still aim for correct seating posture. This including having feet flat on the floor or supported on a foot stool of appropriate height.
- Some cushions styles have one smooth side and one slightly bumpy side, to allow the option of additional sensory input through the tactile (touch) system. You can have either side facing up
- Air cushions can also provide a great basis for practising balance - standing on cushions challenges balance and core control.

Over inflated:

