

FOR MY OT/PT TEAM - MAY 18, 2022

I am Steve Bachman and with me is my wife Joann Pfeiffer.

I will not be able to communicate much beyond YES/NO answers, so I'm hoping to get information to you with this. First, a few things you should know:

1. I am in this wheelchair virtually 24x7 every week. Yes, I sleep in it. I am off of it only twice a week - Thursdays and Sundays - I spend 2-3 hours on my commode chair to move my bowels and to shower. This routine has held for more than two years; probably three or four.

2. The wheelchair is fairly important to me.

3. It is possible that I am eligible and in need of a new wheelchair. If so, I would like to pursue that. HOWEVER, I think there at least two changes you could help me with today that may do a whole lot of good for me in the meantime. I will write more about the chair, but these two immediate needs are:

3A. STRAIGHTENED SEATBACK PAD & HEADREST.

3B. JOYSTICK MOVED AWAY FROM ME (which would allow a more upright posture, and stop the sliding forward and down that is such a problem for me).

4. It will be difficult getting me out of and back into my chair today. The process Joann and I use at home would probably horrify you. We make it work.

5. This chair has never been serviced - lubed, bolts tightened, etc - as Permobil recommends. It is growing increasingly creaky and squeaky.

6. There is a calibration procedure for positioning using the the "M3" setting. One time an OT/PT pair tried to execute it here, but ran into trouble (the chair got stuck in an unusable position) and had to call a support hotline for help. Recovering from it took several steps under the direction of a support person. Though it probably needs a calibration, Joann and I have not tried to do - for obvious reasons.

7. Much more concerning than the calibration to is the overall fit for me. I have appended photos of the chair which will - I hope - illustrate some of my concerns without, or before, me getting out of it. Below are a list of fit and positioning concerns (positioning here does NOT refer to chair's positioning up/down/tilt calibration).

FIT AND SEATING POSITION

I have felt for a long time that the chair is somehow "crooked", though it has been difficult to articulate this when I have so seldom (if ever) had an opportunity to see it. I'm always in it.

I should say that I have complained about it to Joann, but I've resisted coming here to try to get anything done about it. The last two years, in particular, have been rough. I canceled an appointment last summer.

Here is a list:

1. The crookedness of my seatback - the pad at least, but maybe it is more - is a big problem for me. I believe that photo #1 shows it clearly. I lean uncomfortably to my left, and I find myself fighting this all day, every day. The seatback pad is clearly higher at the right of the photo (my left as seated). Whatever has caused this (my driving posture maybe), fixing it would be a big relief.
2. The headrest has never fit me well. Whether it's because of my lean to the left or not, we haven't been able to fix it. The blue kneepad on my headrest (shown in photos) is there to keep my head from lolling to far to my left, especially at night. If the headrest can be centered better on my head (or if I were able to sit straighter), I wouldn't need it.
3. My armrests are at different heights, and always have been. There may be a reason they were set that way, I don't know. It may have contributed to the seatback/pad crookedness problem. My OT/PTs have tried to change this without success.
4. When we first got this chair it came equipped with an extra-tall seat cushion (may have been 6 inches high). It was cheap knock-off of Roho, felt flimsy, and popped a couple times before we gave up on it. We got a smaller cushion (height-wise) - the Roho on it now - and had to McGuyer a riser using high-density foam. It's okay-ish.
5. It is apparent to me, looking at photo #3, that I am keeping my seatback tilted too far back. At least part of the reason I do so is that tilting farther forward - more upright - makes my elbow angle too acute, making it harder for me to push and pull my arm with my shoulder. Using my shoulder to move my arm is the only way I can drive or reposition chair.
6. One consequence of my tilting so far back is that I am constantly sliding forward and down. Countless times a day I attempt, without much success, to push against my footrests to reverse the slippage.
7. Lastly (whew!), my footrests and/or calf pads seem off-center and otherwise wonky.

THANK YOU for reading, and for your efforts!

Photos follow...

#1 - Showing seatback and/or its pad is crooked.



#2 - Showing crooked seatback, crooked headrest, added seat height.





#3 - If seatback were more upright, inside angle of my arm would be $< 90^\circ$, which would make driving difficult. Moving joystick forward would help.