

Size Matters - tips for measuring challenging body shapes

Principle	For oversized	For undersized
Prepare	2 metre paper tape Limb paper tapes Tape extensions (10/pack)	Retractable tape measure Limb paper tapes Tracing plastic/paper
Prescribe	Consider the usual guidelines for providing a good and effective garment. Then adjust for idiosyncrasies of size.	
Simulate	Simulate how excess tissue will sit in a garment – use cling wrap to approximate positioning.	
Protect	Protect skin folds, and areas of potential excoriation – consider support panels or padding.	Protect bony prominences – consider padding or lining. Reduce compression on small circumferences
Reinforce	Consider postural support panels or reinforcement for excess and pendulous tissue.	
Anchor	Specifically consider anchorage – 5cm elastic, silicone-backed elastic, drawstrings, zips, suspenders, location of end of garment,	
Assist	With donning and doffing – zips (with fastening aids and loopers), Velcro, donning aids, carer application.	With donning and doffing – ensure bony prominences are protected.
Network	Use the Jobskin Clinical Advisors and Designers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - talk through specific challenges by phone, they may request additional measurements - take photos! They seriously assist with design. - provide additional measurements particularly with asymmetry 	

Tips for Measuring Challenging Body Shapes

1. **Prepare.** Make sure you have enough tape extensions available before you start measuring. There are 10 in an envelope so for morbidly obese patients you may need more than one pack.
2. **Prescribe.** Start with garment prescription - consider the usual guidelines for providing a good and effective garment. These guidelines will ensure that your garment ticks all the boxes OTHER than accommodating obesity. You can then adjust what you have in mind for your patient to accommodate the patient's size and idiosyncrasies in body shape.
3. **Simulate.** Simulate how excess tissue will sit in a garment. Tissue that hangs down (like flabby upper arms, sagging breasts or pendulous bellies) don't 'hang' in a garment, the garment supports and contains that tissue. Wherever possible, a woman should wear a bra if her torso is being measured - that is a straightforward way to support the sagging tissue. Other body parts are not so easily contained without compromise to the measurements, but *cling wrap* is a fabulous option when applied with care and dignity. Wrap the arm/leg/belly then measure over the top of the cling wrap.
4. **Reinforce.** Consider postural support panels and/or reinforcements for excess and heavy tissue, eg an abdominal support panel to support the weight of a pendulous abdomen. This provides both support to the hanging heavy tissue AND extends the life of the garment by making it more robust.
5. **Anchor.** Ensure you specifically consider anchorage - this can be helped by 5cm elastic, silicone-backed elastic, drawstrings, zips (with fastening aids and zip loops) and of course, wherever possible, anchoring the garment at a narrower point of the body or limb. NEVER end a garment at the widest point - the best will in the world won't keep that garment up!
6. **Assist.** Donning and doffing can be *really* tricky in the morbidly obese patient, with possible limitations in reach and mobility, plus the challenge of pulling up a garment over flabby or large body masses. While zips can be of great assistance, with an obese patient, they are only viable with the addition of fastening aids along the length of the zip, and sometimes with strong Velcro tabs at the top.
7. **Network.** Use the Jobskin Clinical Advisors and Designers - they are more than willing to help. You can do this in a few ways
 - a. give them a call and talk through the challenges that you are facing - they may request additional measurements or may suggest alterations to the garment to support excess soft tissue
 - b. take photos! Sounds obvious, but these help the design team enormously. A good idea is to include some photos with your tape measure in place, this provides information about where the excess tissue sits
 - c. provide additional measurements particularly when a body part is asymmetrical eg large defect on one flank - in addition to providing a circumferential measure, also provide measures centre front to centre back on both left and right sides.