



Mobility Aids

Amputees are often more aware of the complexities involved with mobility than the general population. Along with the aid to mobility artificial limbs provide, sometimes more assistance is required to ensure stability is also achieved. For example, in certain circumstances, such as on an icy sidewalk, leg amputees are less stable. Amputees need to take extra care to ensure they do not fall and injure their sound leg and perhaps weaken it; it already takes extra strain by compensating for the amputation.

There are many aids available to help amputees safely maintain mobility. These information sheets cover just some of the options. Most are commercially available, but custom adaptations may be required to meet the unique needs of the amputee.

Canes and Crutches

Canes can provide extra stability and may be all that is necessary to give leg amputees added security. Canes come in many different varieties; there is even a cane with a retractable spike to aid with walking in the winter. Crutches may be needed if you have to be without your artificial limb, perhaps when it is being repaired. Standard canes or crutches may be adequate for your needs or you may consider something a little more specialized. For instance, if you travel, telescoping canes or folding crutches may be useful. The canes adjust from 24 inches to 40 inches. The compact crutches adjust from about 25 inches, so they can fit into a suitcase, to about 59 inches to suit your height and needs; they also come with their own carrying bags, making them easy to carry and stow away.



Canes come in many different varieties.

The **iWALK 2.0** is a hands-free alternative to standard crutches. The crutch, which straps directly onto the leg with padded thigh straps, consists of a vertical beam with tread and a supportive tray for the knee. Visit iwalk-free.com for more information.



iWALK 2.0
hands-free crutch

SideStix enable all people to enjoy an active, healthy lifestyle by providing the highest quality and most innovative designs in assistive walking technology. SideStix are the only damper shock absorbent crutches with attachable tips for use on a variety of terrains; snow, sand, cleats and standard tips are available. Visit sidesstix.com for more information.





Walkers can have brakes for added security.

Walkers

There are many types of walkers available to suit individual needs. If something is not commercially available, it could be custom made. For example, one arm amputee broke her hip and had to use a walker and crutches during her rehabilitation. Her physiotherapist made a custom attachment to fit her walker and crutches that allowed her to use her myoelectric arm and retain her mobility.



A customized walker

For added security and safety, you might consider a walker with easily accessible brakes, adjustable handles and shock absorbent tires for

indoor and outdoor use. As with canes, there are many types available. Variations include a walker that has an optional safety brake to allow you to adjust your walking speed; a walker that has a padded seat that flips down when you need to rest and folds away when not in use; and a walker that comes equipped with a curb-climbing mechanism for added mobility.

Cleats

It can be very frightening to slip and fall on an icy sidewalk or step; fortunately, there are ways to prevent this from happening. A pair of slip-on cleats can be placed on shoes or boots to help prevent you from falling. Easy to use, the cleats are small spikes pressed into a sandal-like harness, usually made of rubber, with no buckles or ties to fasten.

A useful tip comes from an amputee's mother. She likes to run all year round, so she asked her mailman what he and his colleagues did to combat the problem of walking on ice. He suggested that she put sheet metal screws in

the soles of her running shoes. Place 3/8 inch screws (not too far through the sole) at various contact points – you simply unscrew them in the spring.

Wheelchairs

Ramps

Permanent ramps may be installed at home to allow for easy wheelchair access or simply if steps are too difficult to manage when walking. There are also portable telescopic, non-slip wheelchair ramps available, which can be adjusted for length and locked into place for safety.



Telescopic wheelchair ramps are a simple option.

Wheelchair and Scooter Totes

There are numerous ways to transport a wheelchair or scooter with your vehicle. Specially designed vans can be purchased and there are also options for cars. To eliminate the difficulties involved in manually folding and placing a wheelchair in the trunk of a car and then removing it again, a car can be equipped with a wheelchair lift. Along the same lines, a scooter can be lifted and hooked to the back of a vehicle for transportation.

Wheelchair Accessories

There are many accessories and aids for wheelchair users. Some examples of useful attachments available are: an umbrella with a holder, which might come in handy to protect you from getting wet or

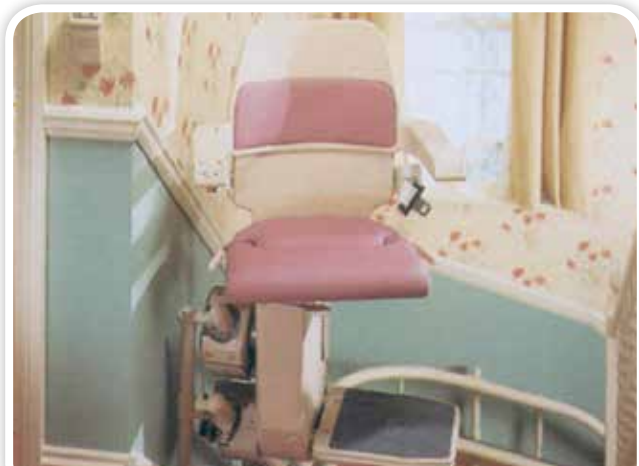


Protect yourself come rain or shine with a wheelchair umbrella.

getting too much sun (the height and angle of the umbrella are adjustable); a mesh canopy, which can also protect you from the sun; an attachable lap tray; a compact mirror; and a cup holder with a snap-on lid and an opening for drinking.

In the Home

Stairlifts



Stairlifts are available to suit most kinds of staircases.

If stairs are too difficult to manage, you may consider installing a stairlift. Stairlifts enable the user to glide up and down stairs safely while seated. Stairlifts can be adapted for all types of staircases, straight or curved.

In the Bathtub and Shower

The bathroom presents some safety considerations for amputees. It is important to use caution to ensure you do not slip or fall in the tub or shower. Some amputees have a specially designed swim/water leg they can wear. The **Aqualimb** by Endolite is specifically designed for this purpose, as well as the Aulie **Nylon Knee** for above knee amputees.

Grab bars can be installed on the walls or on the side of the tub to aid you in getting in or out of the shower stall or bathtub. These can be installed wherever best suits your needs. Two-handed grab bars can be placed on the side of the tub for even greater security. Grab bars can also be placed vertically near toilets and commodes to make getting on or off the toilet seat easier and safer.

Bath boards and transfer benches allow you to take a shower while seated.

Benches provide easy transfer from a wheelchair into the bathtub.



Vertical grab bars can be placed at various levels in your bathroom; some versions attach to the bathtub itself.