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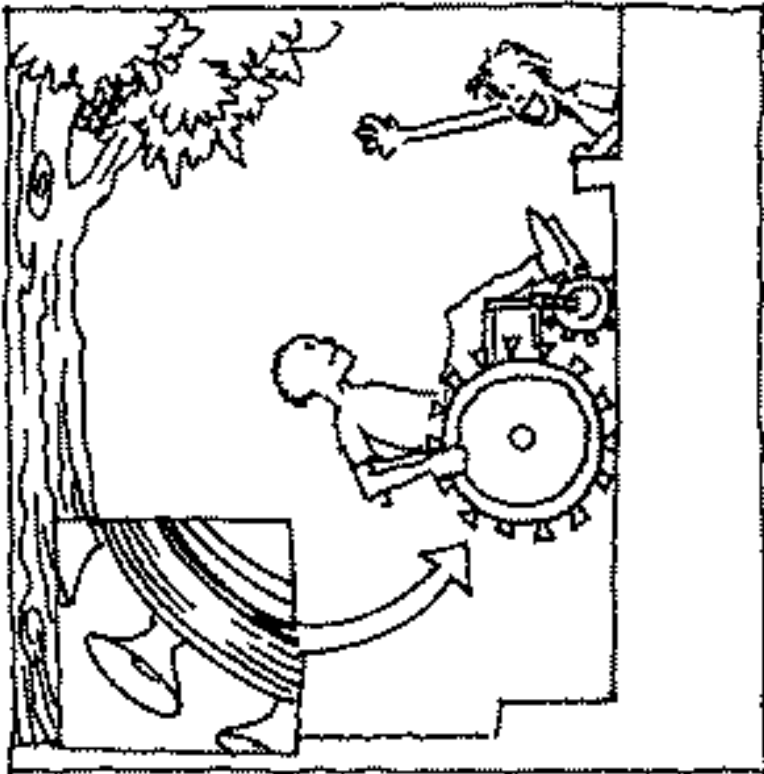
WheelchairNet

The Manual Wheelchair Training Guide

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Appendix B:

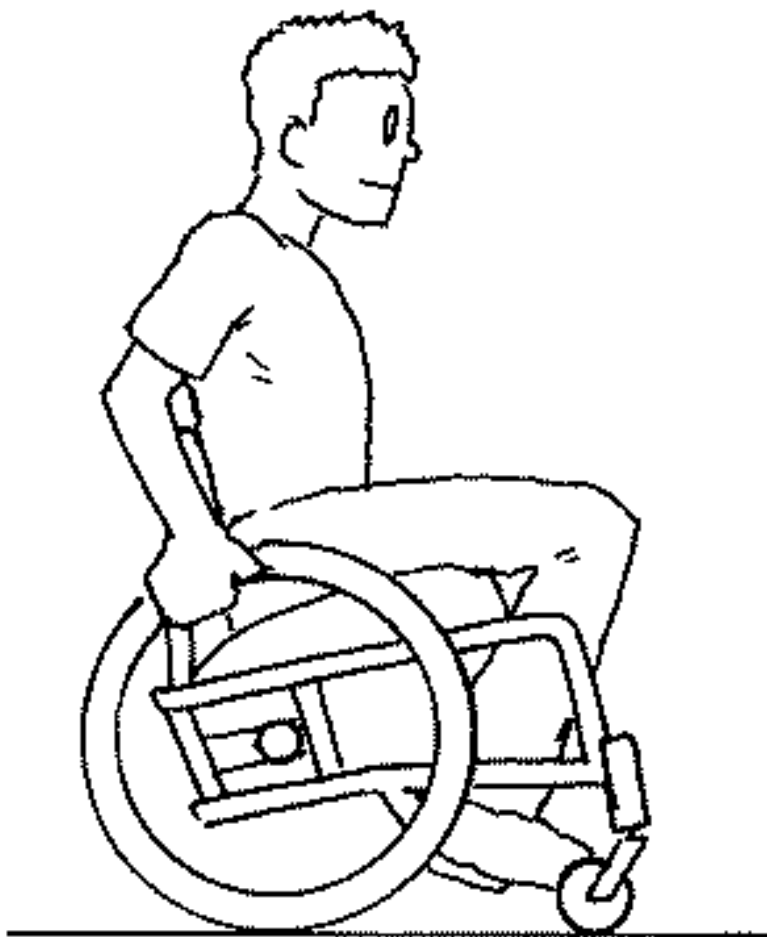
Accessories



The availability of accessories for wheelchair riders has expanded tremendously over the past few years. You could never need or use all the accessories available on the market, if you did, your chair would be bristling with enough gadgets and gizmos to rival a one-man novelty band. The accessories you choose

will reflect your personal abilities, activities, skill level, and plain old personal preference. An accessory you use all the time might be merely a hindrance to another. You will grow out of some accessories you found indispensable when you first started using a wheelchair. You may grow into other accessories as you gain experience with your chair. Below is a list of different accessories, including a description, other common terms for the accessory, and the positives and negatives of using it.

active rehab wheelchair - Wheelchair model that can be adjusted in many directions and used in some sports. Usually made of aluminum and lighter in weight than other wheelchairs.



active rehab wheelchair

add-on power system - Designed to convert a manual wheelchair into a powered one.

Plus: easier to disassemble for travel than standard powered wheelchair motors; can provide power assistance driving up a hill or over long distances, while still permitting the chair to be used in manual mode

Minus: added weight significantly decreases the maneuverability of the manual wheelchair in manual mode

airless tire inserts: flat-free inserts - Designed to fit inside the tire to eliminate the need for air-filled tubes; usually made of foam.

Plus: eliminates the risk of a flat tire

Minus: give a rougher ride than air-filled tires; heavier; more difficult and expensive to change when tire wears out

anti-tippers - Small wheels attached to the back of your wheelchair and designed to prevent you from tipping over backward. Anti-tippers are often included with your wheelchair equipment. They should be requested in all cases because situations may arise where even very experienced users may wish to use them.

Plus: allows you to climb steep hills without tipping backward; may be used to travel in narrow spaces once the rear wheels have been removed

Minus: cannot balance in a wheelie; limits the ability to cross thresholds and climb obstacles and curbs

airplane wheels - When quick release rear tires are removed, the wheelchair can roll on these wheels down an airplane aisle.

Plus: allows you to pull yourself through a narrow door or down an airplane aisle

armrest panels - These plastic or metal guards attach to the armrests, between the wheel and the rider.

Plus: keeps tire dirt on the outside of armrests and away from your clothes

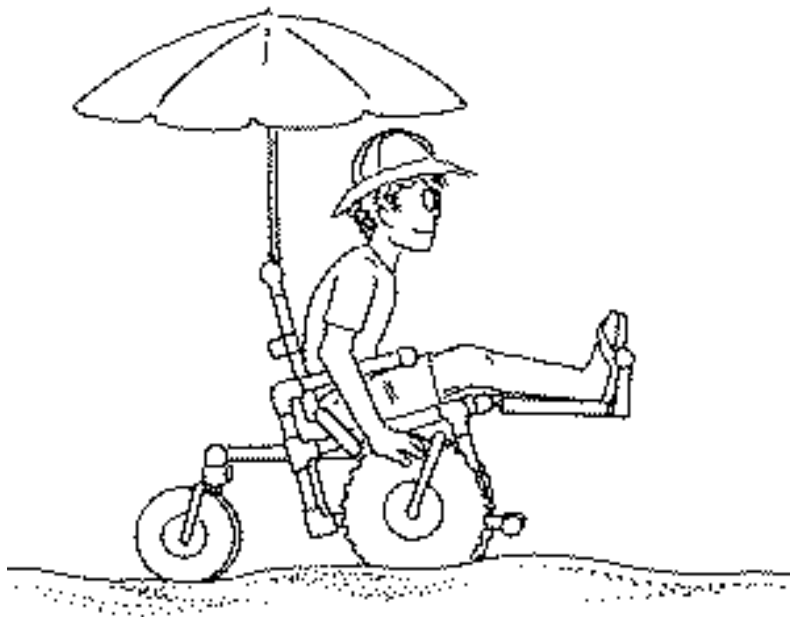
Minus: may reduce the effective width of your wheelchair seat; be sure to check the pressure on both sides of your hip bones

backpack - Bag designed to be worn on the back, it can also be attached to the back of a wheelchair by hooking the straps over the push handles or frame. Backpacks specifically designed for wheelchairs are also available.

Plus: can carry an assortment of supplies

Minus: additional weight on the back of the chair can increase likelihood of tipping over backward (if you plan to use a backpack often, practice skills with it on your chair)

beach wheelchair - Wheelchair designed to negotiate sand and soft surfaces. Has wide balloon tires with large treads and a longer wheelbase to provide added stability.



beach wheelchair

bicycle lights - Lights designed to clip onto bicycles can increase your visibility to motorists. A white halogen lamp can act as a headlight. Blinking red lights can be clipped to the rear of your wheelchair to improve your visibility.

Plus: helps you view upcoming terrain; increases your visibility to motorists when traveling in the street; removable

Minus: require batteries; may not be as easy to mount on a wheelchair as to a bike

bike trailer - A wheeled cart that can be attached to the back of the wheelchair for added storage.

Plus: adds storage space if you need to transport a lot of things

Minus: limits maneuverability; requires more energy to propel wheelchair

caster pins: caster locks - These pins lock the caster in the forward or rearward trailing position.

Plus: stabilizes wheelchair when doing transfers; helpful when in rehab or to those new to using a wheelchair

Minus: usually unnecessary for more experienced users

cellular phone - Portable, wireless telephones.

Plus: can be used to contact help in an emergency

Minus: must keep batteries charged; adds weight; additional expense to maintain

chair guards: frame guards - Chair guards are plastic or leather covers that fit over your wheelchair.

Plus: protects paint from damage caused by impact

chest strap - A strap attached to the back of the wheelchair that crosses under your arms and over your chest. It can help prevent you from falling forward. Always use a lap belt if you are using a chest belt.

Plus: can prevent injury that might occur when falling forward out of wheelchair during sudden stops; provides additional trunk stability

Minus: locks you into your wheelchair, which may cause an injury if wheelchair falls over; can

restrict mobility of trunk and/or buttocks

clothing guards: mud guards - Plastic or nylon guards that stay between your wheels and clothes to keep you clean.

Plus: keeps clothing from getting soiled by dirt kicked up from tires

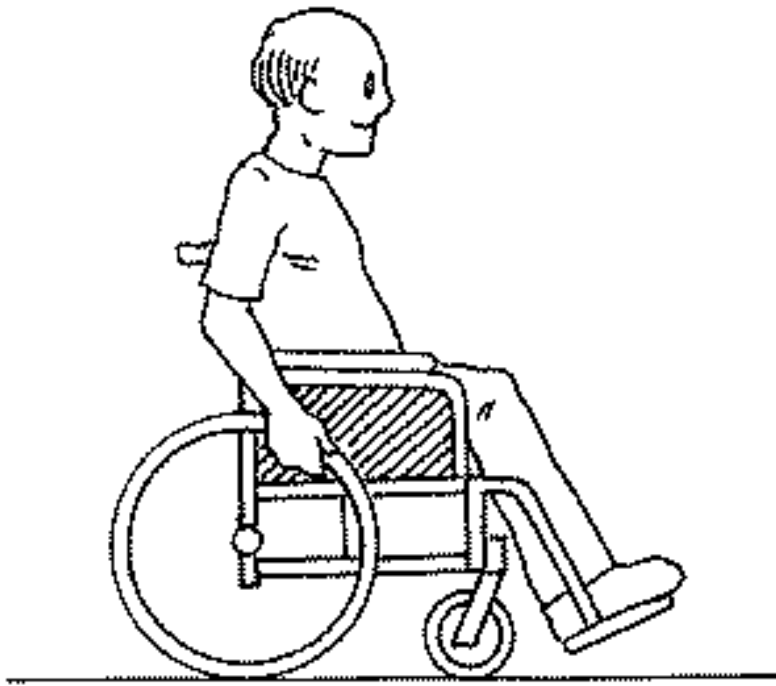
Minus: some people find clothing guards unsightly; may narrow the width of the seat

daily rehab wheelchair - Designed to be used regularly on a long-term basis for everyday tasks. Provides many adjustable features to maximize comfort and maneuverability.



daily rehab wheelchair

depot style wheelchair - Basic wheelchair model typically used in hospitals. Provides very few adjustable features and is not designed for daily long-term use



depot-style wheelchair

duct tape - Wide plastic tape embedded with fiber webbing for strength

Plus: very strong and sticky; can be used for temporary repairs while on the road

Minus: should not be used in place of proper wheelchair parts (e.g., not equivalent to a bolt); may leave a sticky residue after removal

dynamic brakes - Used to slow a moving wheelchair. Rare, but available on some European-made wheelchairs.

Plus: may be helpful when moving on downward slopes

Minus: adds weight to the wheelchair; may interfere with usual propulsion and rear wheel removal

electrical tape - Thin, stretchy plastic tape that is used to bind electrical wires. Comes in many colors.

Plus: can be used for on the road repairs until you can get home and fix the problem properly

Minus: not as sticky or strong as duct tape

flags - A tall, flexible rod with a triangular flag (usually vinyl or plastic); usually comes in a fluorescent color. Mounts to the back of your wheelchair to improve your visibility.

Plus: helps prevent accidents by making you more visible to motorists

Minus: many dislike the way the flag looks, can get caught on low-hanging obstacles

flashlight - Useful when traveling along dark streets and to improve your visibility to others. For easy access, use a Velcro™ strap to attach it to the frame of your wheelchair.

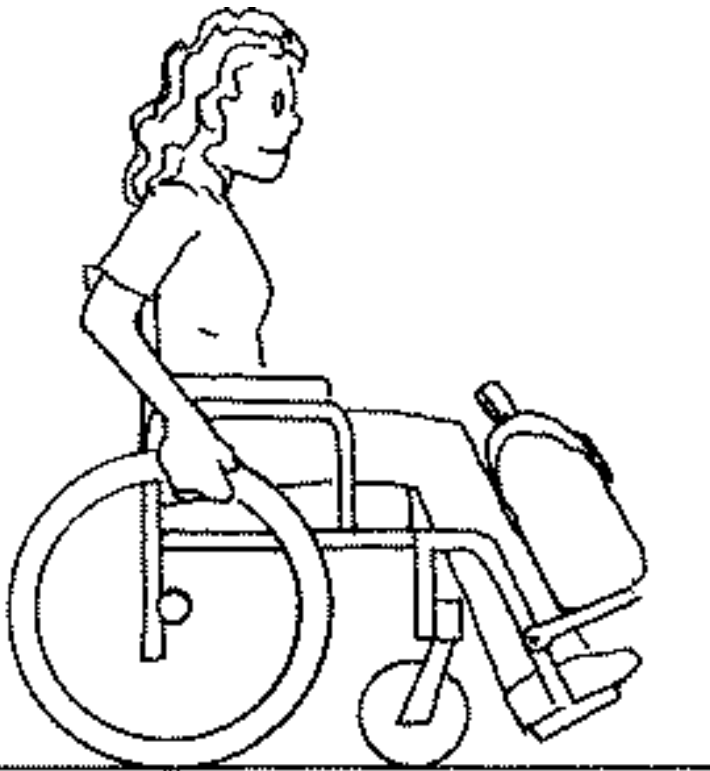
Plus: can be used to look for lost objects and to help perform emergency repairs

Minus: people with limited hand function may have difficulty operating

fold-down briefcase rest - Ledge that attaches to the footrest side rails. When raised, can hold a briefcase or travel bag at your feet, where you can access it easily. Folds down and out of the way when not in use.

Plus: keeps items conveniently located; folds up when not in use

Minus: heavy bag may tip wheelchair in the forward direction



fold-down briefcase rest

foot straps - Straps that attach to the footrests and loop over the top of each foot to keep them from sliding forward off the footrests.

Plus: prevent feet from falling forward off footrests; limit the chance of injury or accident caused by feet hitting the ground in front of the footrests; will prevent legs from falling onto face in a backward fall

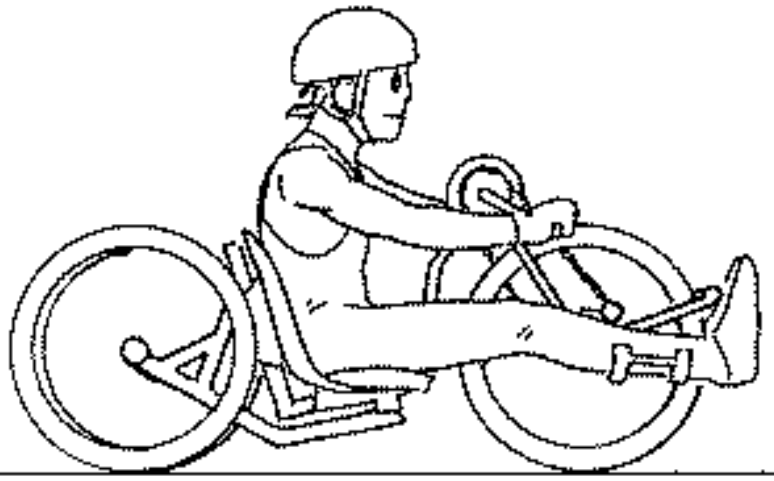
Minus: need to be released for transfers

gloves - Gloves with grips such as plastic strips or dots on the palms.

Plus: keep your hands clean; help prevent blisters; help prevent hands from sliding on the pushrims; can protect hands from friction burns when braking down a steep grade

Minus: can be hot to wear

handbike - bicycle that can be pedaled with the hands and arms.



handbike

handi-wipes, wet nap: baby-wipes - Wet cloths used for cleaning hands and face. Available in plastic dispensers or in individual packets.

Plus: can clean your hands when a sink is not nearby or accessible

Minus: occupy limited carrying space

head rests - Mounts to the back of the wheelchair and used to support the head, as in car seats.

Plus: reduce chance of whiplash if head is snapped back in an auto accident

Minus: may limit sight when looking behind

hill climbers: grade aids - Hill climbers attached to the wheelchair on or near the wheel lock. When engaged, they allow the wheelchair to roll forward, but prevent it from rolling backward.

Plus: reduces the likelihood of rolling backward on an incline

Minus: may interfere with usual wheelchair propulsion

key clasps - Small clasps with key rings attached that can hook keys to the frame of your wheelchair.

Plus: easy access to keys; keeps keys visible to limit theft from a backpack

Minus: the clasp may be hard to open for persons with limited mobility in their hands

lap belt - A belt worn across the lap to prevent forward falls out of the wheelchair. A lap belt should always be used with a chest support. Belt clasps come in many different styles.

Plus: can prevent injury that might occur when falling forward out of wheelchair, due to a sudden stop; provides stability to allow independent function

Minus: locks you into your wheelchair, which may cause an injury if wheelchair tips completely forward; can restrict mobility of trunk and/or buttocks

leg straps - Straps that hold the legs to the wheelchair frame just above the footrests.

Plus: prevent feet from falling off footrests, limiting chance of injury caused by feet getting stuck behind footrests; useful on rough terrain; will prevent legs from flopping onto the face in a backward fall

Minus: may interfere with swing-away footrests

mirrors - Mirrors mounted onto the frame of your wheelchair can be used similarly to mirrors on a car.

Plus: helps you see what's behind you

Minus: will not help you see motorists, pedestrians, and bicyclists in your blind spot (the area just to the side and behind you that is not reflected in the mirror)

noisemaker - A horn or bell attached to your wheelchair can be used to signal motorists, pedestrians, and bicyclists. Can be purchased at bicycle shops.

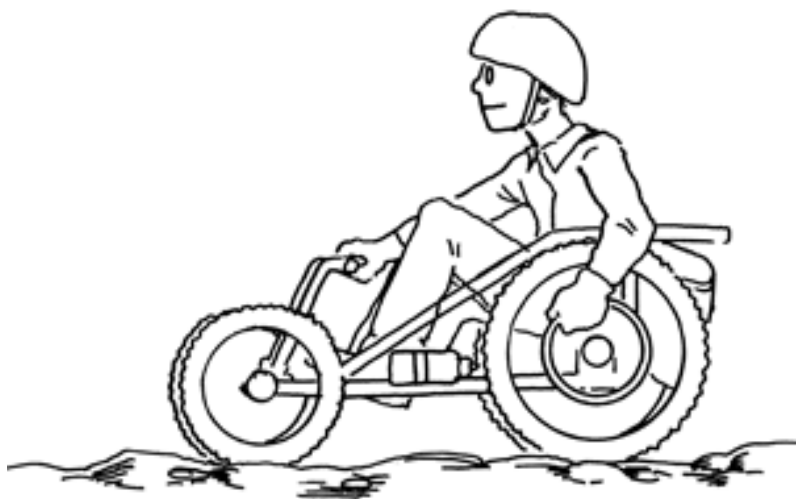
Plus: notifies other motorists, pedestrians, and bicyclists of your presence to reduce the possibility of collision

Minus: some do not like the way horns look or sound; may be difficult to reach and activate

off-road wheelchair - Wheelchair with large knobby tires similar to those found on mountain bikes, and featuring a longer wheelbase for improved stability. Many have hand-operated bicycle brakes. Off-road wheelchairs are designed to negotiate rough, unpaved surfaces.

Plus: permits you to access more types of surfaces independently

Minus: heavier and more difficult to propel than a standard wheelchair



off-road wheelchair

patch kit - A patch kit will help fix flat tires. You will still need a pump to fill the patched tire with air.

Plus: permits you to repair tire punctures on the road

Minus: adds weight to your supplies.

pump - Can be used to inflate tires that need air.

Plus: helps you avoid being stranded.

Minus: adds weight

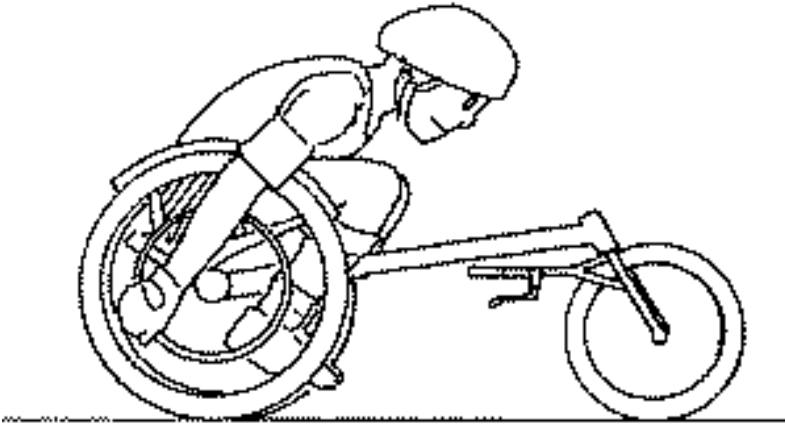
push handles - Handles attached to the top of the seat back that enable an assistant to push or tilt the wheelchair.

Plus: helpful if assistance is required frequently; can be used to help right yourself after leaning forward or perform a weight shift; will hit the ground first if you tip over backward, which could

help protect your head

Minus: additional weight; may impede your propulsion stroke; may serve as an unwanted invitation for others to push you

racing wheelchair - Lightweight, three-wheeled wheelchair designed in an aerodynamic shape to maximize traveling speeds. Used in racing events.



racing wheelchair

recliner: reclining backrest - Allows the seat-to-back angle to be increased by permitting the backrest to move backward.

Plus: can be used for a weight shift for pressure relief or postural stability; may help with bed-to-wheelchair transfers (recline backrest and roll or slide from bed onto your wheelchair); may increase sitting time

Minus: chairs with recliners often have long wheelbases for stability, which increase the turning space required; are heavier and more difficult to propel than standard wheelchairs

reflective tape - Brightly colored plastic or vinyl tape that reflects light aimed at it; can be attached to your wheelchair and/or clothing.

Plus: makes you more visible to motorists

Minus: may appear unsightly to some wheelchair users

reflectors - Plastic disks or rectangles that reflect light aimed at them; can be attached to the spokes, frame, or back of a wheelchair to improve your visibility to motorists. Recommended if wheeling along streets in traffic is anticipated.

seat cushions - Seat cushions come in a variety of styles and materials, including plastic, foam, gels, air, or water. You can buy custom cushions made to fit your body or cheaper, mass-produced cushions. Select the proper type after consulting with a rehabilitation or seating therapist.

Plus: a proper seat cushion can improve posture and comfort; may lessen the probability of pressure ulcers

Minus: a seat cushion not suited to your needs may adversely affect your posture and stability and cause pressure sores

seat pouch - Cloth pouches specifically designed to be attached under wheelchair seats. A fanny pack (nylon or cloth pouches worn around the waist) can be modified to serve as a seat pouch.

Plus: provides additional storage space; under-seat position provides better security than a backpack

Minus: people with little or no upper-body strength may have difficulty reaching under-seat pouches

shoulder harness - Strap that fits over your shoulders and hooks around the back of a wheelchair to help keep you upright and bolster your forward stability.

Plus: can prevent injury that might occur when falling forward out of wheelchair due to sudden stops

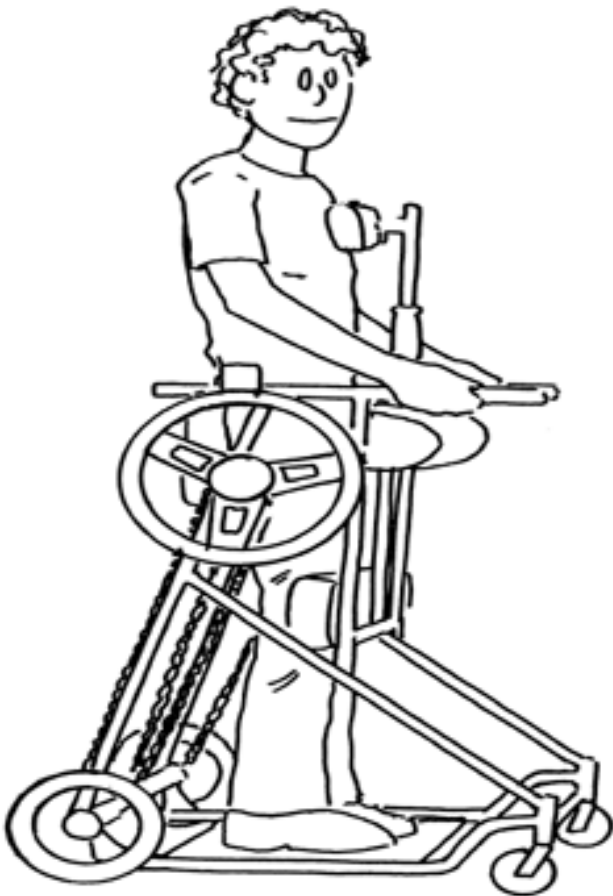
Minus: locks you into your wheelchair which may cause an injury if it tips completely forward; may limit reach even more than a chest strap

spoke guards - Plastic disk that fits over your outer spokes; functions as a hubcap for the rear wheels.

Plus: protects spokes from being damaged, protects fingers from getting caught in spokes, useful in sporting events where wheelchairs tend to collide

Minus: add weight; can degrade quickly

standing wheelchair - Helps wheelchair users regain the feeling of standing to perform tasks.



standing wheelchair

supports: postural supports: trunk supports - Padding that can be added to a wheelchair seat and/or

back to improve the seating position of the rider. May include chest straps, lap belts, side-to-side supports, and hip guides.

Plus: provides stability to allow independent function

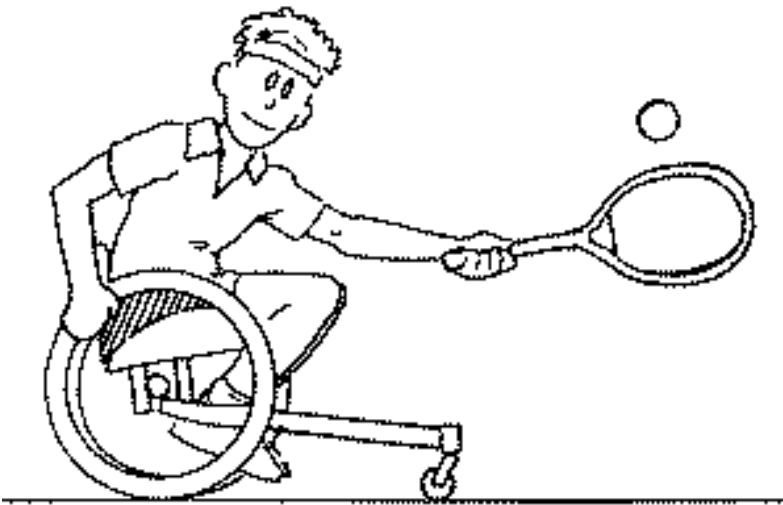
Minus: may restrict mobility of trunk and/or buttocks; may interfere with transfers

Swiss Army Knife or other multi-purpose tool - Can function as an all-in-one tool kit; depending on the model, it can include screwdrivers, scissors, knife blades, files, pliers, and tweezers.

Plus: handy while out and about, saves time spent looking for tools

Minus: requires good hand function to operate

tennis chair - Wheelchair featuring a short wheelbase and one small caster instead of two front ones for enhanced maneuverability. Designed for playing tennis and other racquet sports.



tennis chair

tilt-in-space - Allows you to change the orientation of the seat on the frame by moving the backrest backward and forward while simultaneously raising or lowering the angle of the seat.

Plus: can be used for a mechanical weight shift; can provide additional postural stability; can increase sitting time

Minus: chairs with tilt-in-space may have longer wheel bases for stability. A longer wheel base increases the turning space required and decreases the maneuverability of the wheelchair

tray: lap tray - A flat removable surface (usually plastic) that mounts to the frame and extends over your lap. It can be used as a surface for eating, playing games, reading, writing, etc.

Plus: can provide a good substitutes for tables when available tables and counters are too low to wheel under

Minus: adds weight; may feel and look awkward; limits ability to access other surfaces

web cradle - A square piece of mesh that attaches below the seat and is used for storage.

Plus: additional storage for books, clothes, etc.

Minus: stored items may get dirty

wheel locks - Designed to prevent a stationary wheelchair from rolling but can be used to slow a moving wheelchair.

Plus: useful during transfers and other times when you need the wheelchair to remain stationary

Minus: may interfere with propulsion; adds weight

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