

A Guide to How to Transfer Safely to the Car



A Guide to Transferring Safely to a Car

Assistive technology (AT) is a piece of equipment, device or system that provides people with practical solutions to everyday life activities. You can search our National Equipment Database www.askned.com.au to view a range of products online.

Common issues people have when getting into/out of the car are, turning on the seat, lifting their legs into the car and standing up from the car seat. Some basic principles to follow when getting into/out of the car are:

- Ensure that there is enough space to open the car door and park car on level even surface.
- Slide the seat back to give yourself space to move.
- Sit first, legs second approach.
- Use the main body of the car for support.
- Use gravity to your advantage.

There are a wide variety of transfer aids to assist with getting into and out of the car safely and independently.

Portable handles

A metal handle which fits into the car door lock striker and can assist the user to transfer in and out of the car seat by providing a rigid support handle.

Leg lifters

Used for lifting the user's legs in and out of the car. They have a long plastic strap with loops at the end for holding the feet.



Swivel cushions

Consist of two discs that pivot on each other with slippery inner surfaces and slip resistant top and bottom. They are designed to assist a user to pivot 180 degrees with or without the assistance of a carer. For optimal turning effect, ensure that the user is seated in the middle of the cushion. It works best with a flat car seat as seats with contours may reduce swivel capability.

Foam wedge cushions

Can be used on contoured car seats to flatten out the surface. Using the foam wedge alongside the swivel cushion decreases friction and increases swivel ease on contoured car seats.

Sliding mats

Made from fabrics with slippery surfaces to allow for easier manoeuvrability by reducing friction between the seat and user, models will generally consist of two separate mats, one placed on top of the other. Models with handles can provide a place for carers to hold onto as they assist an individual to reposition in the car.



Electrically operated turning seat

This car seat assists in transfers by eliminating the need to step into the car. The seat is powered and swivels itself out of the car to enable greater space for the person to transfer onto before it moves the passenger back inside the car.

Swivel seats are a good option if the car seat is very deep, or the user has difficulty adjusting their position.

Transfer slide boards

Used to assist with sliding transfers by bridging the gap between surfaces, such as between a car seat and wheelchair, options include a variety of lengths and shapes such as cut out sections designed to accommodate the rear wheels of a self-propelling wheelchair.

Materials used in slide board construction range from timber, polyurethane, fibreglass, and plastic. Smooth or highly polished surfaces will have less friction. One design incorporates a disk that slides along the board. This is designed to minimise friction between the transfer board and the user.

Vehicle mounted hoists

There are a range of hoists available to lift and transfer a person from a wheelchair into a vehicle. They can be manual or electric, and user or attendant operated. These can be fitted to the front or rear doors of the vehicle on either the driver or passenger side.

Vehicle modifications

There are a range of hoists, lifts and ramps suitable for lifting and transporting both the user and their wheelchair together, as well as lifting the wheelchair and scooter separate from the user.

These will generally require vehicle modifications, so consultation with an allied health professional and vehicle modification agent is recommended when considering these options.

Find out more about a wide range of helpful products and devices on NED, our National Equipment Database at askned.com.au. Need help with NED? Call our helpline on 1800 885 886.

Our experienced health professionals can also assist in providing strategies and advice on finding and using the right product for you. Call us on 9381 0600 or complete an appointment request form via our website at www.indigo.org.au

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