

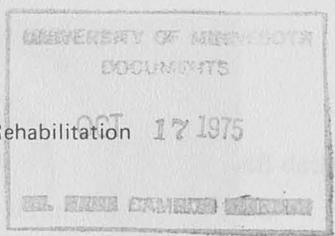
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ABILITY -- not disability

With Bathrooms

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When people have disabilities, their homes must be adapted to help them live as normally and independently as possible. The bathroom is one of the most important areas for change. The more independent people can be, the better their morale. A few simple additions often make this possible. Special materials and equipment fit in well with the decor of a home bathroom. They can be convenient for other members of the family to use as well.



Ceramic tile on bathroom floors should have a non-skid surface. Decorative rubber appliques also can be applied to floors and inside bathtubs and showers to prevent slipping. Rubber bathmats for the bathtub and shower and rubber-backed rugs that do not flip up at the edges give a firm footing.

Bathroom doors should be at least 3 feet wide to accommodate a wheelchair.

Grab Bars

Grab bars come in all shapes and sizes and whatever design fits the handicap best should be used. They may be ordered from rehabilitation catalogues or the rehabilitation sections of large commercial mail order house catalogues.



Grab bars must be reinforced and bolted to wall studs to hold a person's weight.

Install them 2 to 4 inches from the wall to allow a person to get a hand around the bar. Grab bars should be made of rustproof material and should be placed on the person's strong side.



At the toilet. At the toilet the most common type of grab bar is placed at a 45 degree angle on the person's strong side. The angle allows the hand to slide down the bar when sitting down, yet it is at the right height to use to pull up. The front edge should be placed two inches in front of the toilet. It can vary in length from 30 to 35 inches.

Toilets

The average toilet height is about 16 inches, which is too low for persons with leg ailments. It is hard to bend slowly because bending muscles lack strength.

The toilet itself can be elevated or other devices are available.

This type clamps securely to the toilet. It can be ordered from Fashion Able.*

Another type is made of molded plastic and raises the toilet six inches. Both may be ordered from rehabilitation mail order catalogues and hospital supply stores.

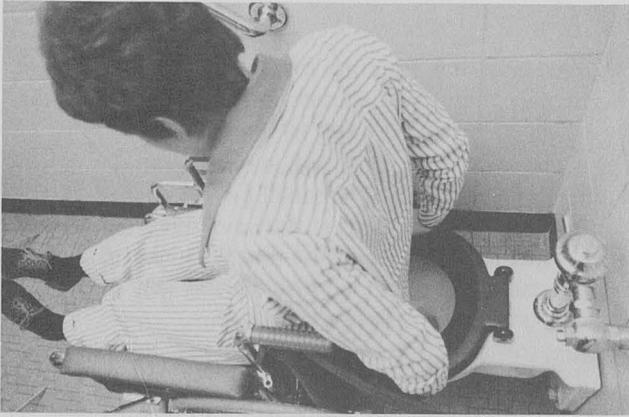
Toilet Transfers from a Wheelchair

For someone in a wheelchair, the toilet should be elevated to the same height as the chair.

Use of Arms Only. Move the wheelchair close to the side of the toilet, lock the brakes. Remove the chair arm and slide across the toilet seat keeping the arms close to the body for good support.

With Use of the Feet. Move the chair close to the toilet at an angle. Lock the brakes, move the footrests out of the way, and remove the chair arm. The feet are used to pivot from the chair to the toilet. Make use of the grab bar with the strong arm.





For Double Amputation. In case of a double amputation or if the bathroom is too small to allow the wheelchair to move to the side of the toilet, the wheelchair may be backed up to the toilet. The wheelchair must be equipped with a zipper back or button fastener, permitting the back to open and fold out of the way. The person slides backward from the chair to the toilet seat.

Crowded Bathroom. In a crowded bathroom, a person with some use of his legs may move the wheelchair up to the toilet, facing it. Stand up and firmly grasp the 45 degree bar for assistance. Turn toward the wall bar, placing the other hand on the bar while turning. Use the bar for support and lean forward. Continue to turn slowly and sit down. A person who is extremely weak may also need a handrail on the other side of the toilet.

Showers

A specially-built shower that has no curb on it allows a wheelchair to roll in and out. The person then can be transferred to a shower seat. The floor, in such a shower, slants to confine the water.

Shower seats. The same principles as a wheelchair transfer apply when a person needs help getting from a wheelchair to a seat in the shower. A grab bar should be handy. Some showers have fold-down plastic seats. These are attached with rust-proof metal hinges to a reinforced wall. A sturdy bath stool with rubber tips on the legs or an old chair could be used. Glider chairs on wheels are available.

Portable shower heads. A portable shower head can be raised or lowered to any height and allows a person to shower without standing or turning around. It is held in the hand and the water can be directed to any area.

Bathtubs

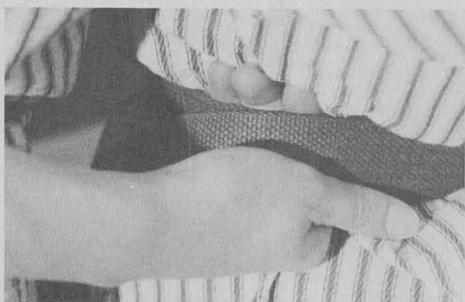
Water makes bathtub surfaces slippery, so it is best to drain the water and to wipe off the edge of the tub before stepping out.

Grab bars. Grab bars are available that can fit on any side of the tub. The handicapped person must decide which type would be of the most use to him. Remember to take advantage of the strong side.

This type of grab bar needs no special installation. It fits over the side of the tub and clamps on.

Transfers. When a person needs help using the bathtub, two main methods can be used—the transfer belt or hydraulic lift.





A transfer belt is made of heavy woven material with a secure buckle. It gives the assisting person something to grasp when transferring the patient. Push the wheelchair as close as possible to the tub, lock it, and put the feet over the side. Transfer the patient to a low stool in the tub by placing the whole hand under the belt. Don't use the fingers. Teamwork is important. Cue the patient before starting. When lifting, the helper should stand close to the patient, keep his back straight, and lift by bending at the knees.

Several types of hydraulic lifts are on the market. This one can be used on a stand at bedside and converted to a bath sling by inserting it in a socket in the floor. The person is outfitted with a sling while still in bed. The sling is made of a waterproof material and the chain does not rust. The sling lowers into the bath with a slight adjustment of the knob. Once in the tub, the patient can do most of his own bathing depending on the handicap.

Conveniences for People in Wheelchairs

Bathrooms. Mirrors placed low allow a person to see himself from a sitting position.

Cabinets under a sink may have to be removed to enable the wheelchair to get close to the sink.

Towel racks should be lowered for easy reach. Towels may be stored on open shelves for easy access.



Around the home. A house can be built or adapted to handle any handicap. Ramps may be attached to fit in with the decor of the house. Attached garages keep the person out of bad weather and make transferring to the house easier.

Carpeting should be the hard-finished kitchen type that is easy to negotiate with crutches or a wheelchair.

All hallways and doors should be wide enough for a wheelchair.

Someone who is confined to bed or a wheelchair needs large windows low enough to provide a good view. A person's attitude can change if the outside is brought in. Birdhouses and flowers make the view more interesting.

*Mail order houses for rehabilitation equipment:

- . Fashion Able
Rocky Hill, New Jersey 08553
- . Fred Sammons, Inc.
Box 32
Brookfield, Illinois 60513
- . Miles Kimball
41 West Eighth Ave.
Oshkosh, Wisconsin 54091
- . Rehabilitation sections of such catalogues as
Penney's, Sears Roebuck, and Montgomery Ward

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