



Independent Living Centre
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Guide to using an Attendant Propelled Wheelchair

Most people using an attendant-propelled wheelchair will rely on someone else to lift and carry it around. Wheelchairs can be cumbersome and heavy to lift into a car. Chairs with a cross bracing mechanism underneath can be folded and can be made lighter by removing the leg rests and armrests and quick release wheels, where possible. Make sure it will fit into your car boot space and that you are confident in the taking apart and re-assembling of the wheelchair.

To open a wheelchair: Grip armrests or push handles and pull slightly apart, push down on each side of the seat canvas until the wheelchair is fully open.

To close a wheelchair: Make sure the footrests are lifted up and any items removed from the seat, fold backrest, (if this can be done), grip seat canvas at the back and at the front and pull upwards bringing the sides of the frame together, push armrests together to close wheelchair completely.

To lift a wheelchair: The wheelchair should be lifted by holding the frame NOT the armrests, footrests or other detachable parts.

Footrests: Most wheelchairs have removable footrests, there is usually a locking device or catch which needs to be released before the footrest can be lifted off the pivot pins OR swung around to the side of the wheelchair while still on pivot pins.

Armrests: These are removable on most models of wheelchair. They usually slot into a point in the frame, in most cases with a retaining catch which needs to be released before removing the armrests.

To get into the wheelchair: Make sure the brakes are on and that the foot rests are out of the way by lifting up or swinging away, stand close to the wheelchair and, using the arm rests for support, sit into the wheelchair, replace footrests. Fasten seat belt.

To get out of the wheelchair: make sure the brakes are on and that the footrests are out of the way by lifting up or swinging away, **place feet on the ground** and stand up using the armrests for support.

Do not stand on the footplates while transferring as the wheelchair will become unstable.

Kerb Climbing: UP: tilt the wheelchair onto the rear wheels and lift the front castors onto the kerb, then push (rather than lift) the rear wheels onto the kerb.

Kerb Climbing: DOWN: **Backwards** – Back chair to the edge of kerb, pull rear wheels down onto road, tilt the chair using tipping levers and pull the tilted chair until footrests are clear of the kerb, lower the front castors onto the road.