





# Choice Assistance Guide - Manual Wheelchairs

When choosing a manual wheelchair, it is important to make your decision based on your needs. By considering a small number of factors, you can make the best choice to maximise your independence and meet your requirements.

## Which type of wheelchair do I need?

<p><b>Self-Propelling</b></p> <p>If you want to be able to wheel yourself around, you should choose a self-propelling wheelchair. These have larger rear wheels to allow you to do this. Large wheels also make going over rough terrain easier.</p>	
<p><b>Transit</b></p> <p>If you will always be pushed in your wheelchair by an attendant, a transit wheelchair is suitable for you. A transit wheelchair is also easier to transport and store, as it takes up less room.</p>	
<p><b>Super Lightweight</b></p> <p>This chair is made from lightweight aluminium. It is suitable for occasional use, for short periods of time. Because it is so lightweight, it is ideal for a carer to use, lift and transport. These wheelchairs are usually available with and without attendant brakes.</p>	
<p><b>Tilt-In-Space</b></p> <p>This chair is suitable for you if you have needs that the above wheelchairs don't address. Users with poor postural control, poor head control or pressure care issues may benefit from this wheelchair. The tilt/recline function also allows a user to be positioned for comfort if they get tired.</p>	



## How do I know which wheelchair is right for me?

- **Professional Advice** – It is always a good idea to speak to your healthcare professional. They can help you decide what wheelchair is right for you and how much support you need.
- **Environment** – Consider where you will be using your wheelchair. Will it fit through doors, corridors and smaller areas? Do you need any additional equipment, such as portable ramps, to use the wheelchair in your environment?
- **Safety** – Can you safely use the wheelchair? If it is self-propelling, can you to put the brakes on and take them off?
- **Transport & Storage** – Consider whether you need to fit your wheelchair into the boot of a car. Do you need to store your wheelchair when not in use? Will it fold to allow you to do this?

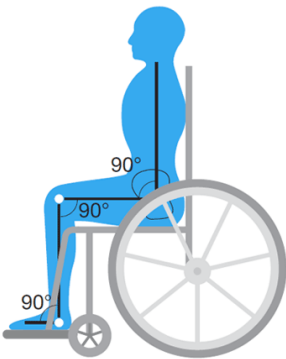


## I've chosen my wheelchair, how do I ensure it's the right fit?

- **User Weight** – You should always ensure that you stay within the recommended weight limits of the wheelchair.
- **Seat Width** – For a comfortable fit, ensure the seat width is appropriate for you. Measure the widest part of your hips and add 2 inches - this will accommodate bulky clothing. This is the seat width you should select. You should be able to place your hand between your hips and the armrest panels.
- **Seat Depth** – You should be able to fit 2 – 3 fingers between the front edge of the seat and the back of your knee.
- **Other Dimensions** – This depends on the model of wheelchair you have chosen e.g. appropriate backrest height on a self-propelling wheelchair versus a tilt-in-space wheelchair will differ. Your equipment specialist and healthcare professional can advise.

## How do I use my wheelchair?

This will vary, depending on the type of wheelchair you have chosen. It is always a good idea to ask your healthcare professional to show you how to safely use your new wheelchair and get the most out of it.

Here are some tips:

		
<p>A good fit is important for your comfort. Aim for the 90 - 90 - 90 rule for good positioning in your wheelchair.</p>	<p>When transferring on and off the wheelchair, always ensure that brakes are engaged.</p>	<p>Liaise with your healthcare professional to learn how to safely use your wheelchair.</p>