



fatcatsocieties.sg

A guide to using your manual wheelchair safely

Information for patients and their families



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Introduction

This booklet describes how you can use the wheelchair safely indoor and outside. Its is important that you read this booklet and follow the safety instructions with care. Incorrect use of your wheelchair can lead to accidents and injuries.

The manual guide will show you how to use your wheelchair safely, how to transport it and look after it. Please refer to this booklet whenever you need to. If you have any questions or concerns, or if your wheelchair is faulty, please contact us through (kazu@fatcatsocietie.sg).

Your wheelchair

Manual self-propelled wheelchair



1. Pushing handles
2. Backrest
3. Armrest
4. Seat
5. calf Strap
6. Footplate
7. Front Caster

8. Brake
9. Rear Wheel
10. Hand Rim
11. Folding Hinge (back cane release lever)
12. Firm Lock
13. Hand Brake

Manual attendant-propelled wheelchair



1. Pushing handles
2. Backrest
3. Armrest
4. Seat
5. calf Strap
6. Footplate
7. Front Caster
8. Brake
9. Rear Wheel
10. **No side rim for pushchair**
11. Folding Hinge (back cane release lever)
12. Firm Lock
13. Hand Brake

Using the wheelchair

Opening the wheelchair

- Stand in front of the wheelchair.
- Push down and outward on the sides of the seat, keeping your fingers pointing inwards to prevent them getting trapped.
- Continue pushing downwards until the wheelchair is fully opened.



Closing the wheelchair

- Stand beside the wheelchair, grasp the front and back of the seat canvas and pull upwards.
- Fold the backrest by squeezing the back cane release lever at the folding hinge.
- Lift the footplates up.



Never attempt to lift the wheelchair by any detachable parts, others then the mention one. This may result in injury or damaging the wheelchair.

Getting into your wheelchair

- Make sure the brakes are on.
- Make sure the footplates are folded up.
- Stand with your back to the chair and put your hands on the armrests.
- You can now lower yourself onto the seat, lower the footplates and place you feet comfortably against the calf strap.



Getting out of your wheelchair on your own

- Make sure the brakes are on.
- Make sure the footplates are folded up.

- Make sure you have any walking aids you need nearby and that these are positioned correctly near to your bed or chair. (With advice from your therapist you may be transferring from your bed or chair in a different way e.g. from the side.)

How to move the wheelchair yourself

(Manual self-propelled wheelchair, manual attendant-propelled wheelchair will still require assistant behind to assist.)

- To move forward, release the brakes, hold the hand rims attached to the rear wheels and push forward.
- To backwards, release the brakes, hold the rims attached to the rear wheels and push back.
- To turn right, hold the right hand rim steady and push forward the left hand rim.
- To turn left, hold the left hand rim steady and push forward the right hand rim.
- Always check there are no obstacles in your way when turning.
- Many pavements and roads slope towards the kerb, causing the wheelchair to veer to one side. You will need to counteract this by steering the wheelchair in the opposite direction.
- Avoid uneven and soft ground. Always use dropped kerbs where available.
- Take additional care on wet, icy or slippery surface.
- Always put the brakes on when you stop.

Manual attendant-propelled wheelchair

- Always make sure the brakes are on when the chair is not being pushed.
- Make sure your passenger's feet are safely on the footplates and elbows, all clothing, rugs or bags are tucked in safely.
- Look well ahead for possible hazards.
- Avoid steep, soft or uneven surfaces as these will make it harder to push or could cause the chair to tip over.
- Always let the person in the chair know what you are going to do, such as tilting them or turning quickly,
- Do not hand heavy bags or shopping on the handles of the chair. This can change the centre of gravity and cause the chair to tip backwards.

Getting down a kerb (with help of a carer)

- Going down a kerb backwards is recommended as it is safer and takes less effort.
- Take extreme care when stepping onto a road.
- Make sure the road is clear.



- Back the wheelchair to the edge of the pavement.
- Pull the rear wheels gently down onto the road surface.
- When the front castors are at the edge of the kerb pull on the handles and push one anti-tip bar with your foot to balance the passenger on the rear wheels. Pull the wheelchair further back into the road, and lower the front castors before turning to cross the road.

Getting up a kerb (with help of a carer)

- Push the wheelchair until the footplates are at the edge of the kerb.
- Hold the wheelchair handles firmly and tilt the chair backwards using the anti-tip bar until the back wheels touch the kerb. The front wheels should be placed on the path.
- Use the handles to lift and push the wheelchair forward.



Going down a steep slope (with the help of a carer)

It is safer if the wheelchair can be guided down a steep slope backwards by a carer.



Getting up and down stairs

Never attempt to use stairs, or to lift a chair with the passenger in it.

Escalators

Never attempt to use a wheelchair on an escalator either alone or with anyone helping.

Lifts

It is easier to go backwards into a lift so that you do not have to turn around in a confined space.

Important safety tips

It is important that you take note of these safety tips to make sure that you are safe when using your wheelchair.

Reaching and bending forwards

- Avoid leaning forwards (beyond the armrest).
- Avoid bending you over the top of the back rest.
- Never attempt 'wheelies'.



Brakes

You should always make sure that the brakes are applied when you are stationary.

Footrests

Never stand on the footplates. This could cause the wheelchair to tip forwards.



Remember that wheelchair are quiet, so make sure others are aware of you.



Everyday obstacles

If you are using the wheelchair without help, you must:

- Avoid obstacles higher than 30mm (e.g. a low kerb), unless you have special anti tippers fitted to the wheelchair.
- Avoid going up or down gradients (slopes) greater than 1 in 11 (9%) which is a drop of more than 1 foot over 11 feet.
- To prevent your wheelchair tipping over, never go up down slopes diagonally.
- When going uphill, bend your body forward and move the wheelchair forwards with quick short pushes to keep up momentum. If you need to rest, apply the brakes.
- When going downhill face the direction you are going in, lean backwards carefully and allow the hand rims to slowly slide though your hands. Be ready to check your speed and direction. Grasping the hand rim more firmly will stop the chair.

Safety straps

- Always securely fasten the lap strap or any safety harness supplied by your therapist.
- Observe weight limits. Do not carry other adults, children or luggage in or on the wheelchair.

Maintenance

It is important that you check the wheelchair once a week for any defects or damage. This is essential for your safety and to get the most effective use of yours wheelchair.

- **Brakes**
Check they are secure, properly adjusted and work correctly.
- **Wheels/Tyres**
Check castors swivel freely. Check tyre pressures and tread.
Use WD40 on bearings and bolts if required.
- **Upholstery/Frame**
Check there are no tears to the back and seat canvases or cushions.
The canvas and frames can be cleaned with warm soapy water.
- **Fixings**
Check nuts/bolts for the footplates, armrests, brakes and any of those that you can find on the frame. Make sure they are tighten with the tools provided.

If you are in any doubt about the safety of the wheelchair, or suspect a fault, please contact us. Do not attempt to repair the wheelchair yourself or modify any parts of the chair. This may make it unsafe to use.