

How To Choose A Suitable Wheelchair

Choosing a wheelchair can be confusing, as there are so many designs to choose from. As a manufacturer of wheelchairs since 1946 and the developers of the first manual foldable wheelchair, Everest & Jennings has a full assortment of wheelchairs and the knowledge to help make

it easy to choose which wheelchair will best fit you and your lifestyle. You should also take the advice from any occupational and physical therapists you may be working with when selecting a wheelchair.

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When looking at different wheelchair options, you should keep in mind the following considerations:

- ☐ Will I be using this wheelchair permanently or is it temporary use only?
- ☐ How long will I be in my wheelchair on a daily basis?
- ☐ Do I need to be able to fold the wheelchair for transport and storage?
- ☐ Do I have limited upper body strength to self propel myself?
- ☐ Does the wheelchair have comfortable armrests?
- ☐ Do I require neck support?
- ☐ Will I need a wheelchair cushion to sit in the wheelchair?
- ☐ Will I be using my wheelchair outdoors or indoors?
- ☐ What type of footrests; fixed, swingaway, elevating leg rests etc?

Someone who will be using the wheelchair independently should look for a self propelling model that typically has large rear wheels with handrims. If you are looking for a wheelchair where it will be pushed by a caregiver or attendant, a transit or transport chair is most suitable. The following will detail the different types of wheelchairs available for you to choose from.

Standard Folding Wheelchairs

A standard folding wheelchair is a good choice if you tire easily and can't walk as far as you used to. These wheelchairs have options such as desk vs. full arm styles, footrests vs. elevating legrests and seat height adjustment on some models. And for convenience, transport and storage, these wheelchairs can be folded.

Sports Wheelchairs

Wheelchair users who have active lifestyles including playing sports or outdoor adventures may require a different type of lightweight and stronger wheelchair. These wheelchairs are often designed similar to sports bicycles where material such as titanium are used for strength, lightweight and durability. The overall design for these wheelchairs is different in regards to the armrests, foot rests and even the front and rear wheels to best suit the needs for the active user.

Power Wheelchairs

Electric wheelchairs are for users who have very limited mobility. They are heavier than a standard wheelchair because they require the use of a battery and motors. There are various types of power wheelchairs such as mid wheel and front wheel drive which affects the speed of the chair and the turning capability. Power wheelchairs are more expensive than standard manual wheelchairs due to their level of customization and sophistication.

Lightweight Wheelchairs

A lightweight wheelchair is ideal if you intend to be in the wheelchair for an extended period of time. Because the wheelchair is lighter, it is easier to self propel which is ideal for those with limited upper body strength. A standard wheelchair typically weighs 40 lbs or more where a lightweight wheelchair averages around 34 lbs. And just as standard wheelchairs, a light weight wheelchair has various options with the front rigging, armstyle and seat height positioning.

Heavy Duty Wheelchairs

Heavy duty wheelchairs are designed to support a higher weight capacity usually over 500 lbs. These wheelchairs are designed with special reinforcements in critical areas, double crossbraces and larger seat sizes such as 20", 22" and 24" for added comfort.

Reclining Wheelchairs

A reclining wheelchair allows for multiple back positioning for pressure relief ideal for those spending the majority of the time in a wheelchair.

Transport Wheelchair

Transport chairs are for the use of transporting someone from one place to another such as to the grocery store or shopping. Unlike a standard wheelchair, a transport chair does not have large rear wheels thus it cannot be self propelled. Transport chairs also have a smaller, narrower frame that fold for easy transport. Everest & Jennings also offers a transport chair/wheelchair combo product for use when with a caregiver to push you or a wheelchair that can be self-propelled.

Choosing the right wheelchair and other accessories such as wheelchair cushions is dependent on your disability and dependence/independence. Consult with your therapist and/or your local home medical equipment provider for assistance.

