







Choice Assistance Guide - Walkers

Who might benefit from a walker?

Walkers are designed to help people walk and move about. Maybe you get tired easily and need extra assistance; maybe you have a health condition, such as arthritis, that is restricting you; or maybe you've had recent surgery and need additional support – a walker could be beneficial for you.

What types of walkers are available?

	Indoors	Outdoors	
<p>Walking Frame</p> <p>This lightweight walker does not have any wheels. It has 4 stoppers (or ferrules). As it doesn't have wheels, this walker is most suited to indoor use.</p>	✓		
<p>2 Wheeled Walker</p> <p>This walker has 2 small wheels at the front and stoppers or glides at the back. It is usually height adjustable to suit user requirements and is lightweight. This walker is most suitable for indoor use.</p>	✓		
<p>Tri Walker (3 Wheeled Walker)</p> <p>This is a compact walker, which makes it easy to use in more confined spaces. These walkers generally come with a bag or basket and are suitable for indoor or outdoor use.</p>	✓	✓	
<p>Seat Walker</p> <p>This is a great walker for outdoor use. The seat means that you can take a break when walking, thus managing fatigue. When choosing this walker, you should consider not only the handle height when you stand, but the seat height so that you can sit comfortably. If castor size options are available, smaller is better for predominant indoor use, while larger is better for predominant outdoor use.</p>	✓	✓	
<p>4 Wheeled Walker</p> <p>This is a good option for outdoor use. The wheels on this walker are generally larger and this makes it easier to use and manoeuvre over outdoor bumps. There is often a seat as standard. These walkers also fold, making them easy to store and transport.</p>	✓	✓	
<p>Forearm Walker</p> <p>A forearm walker is most suitable for those who need more support than the above walkers offer. There are several models of forearm walkers - some focus on rehab, some focus on functionality. It is therefore important to liaise with your equipment specialist or healthcare professional regarding suitability for outdoor use*.</p>	✓	✓*	

How do I know what walker is right for me?

- **Professional Advice** – It is always a good idea to speak to your healthcare professional to help you decide what walker is right for you and how much support you need.
- **Environment** – Consider whether you will be using your walker mainly indoors or outdoors. A smaller wheel is more manoeuvrable for predominant indoor use. A larger wheel is better for predominant outdoor use. Will it fit through doors, corridors and smaller environments?
- **Safety** – Can you safely use the walker? If it has brakes, you must be able to put them on and take them off. If you can't, consider a walker with an alternative brake mechanism e.g. pushdown brakes.
- **Transport & Storage** – Consider whether you need to fit your walker into the boot of a car. Or, do you need to store your walker when not in use? Will it fold to allow you to do this?

I've chosen my walker, 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 walker. If your walker has a seat, you should also check that you can fit comfortably on it.
- **Handle Height** – Stand with your arms relaxed at your side, wearing your regular walking shoes. Adjust the handle height so that the top of the handle is in line with the crease of your wrist.
- **Seat Height** – If your walker has a seat, ensure that you can sit on it comfortably. You should be able to get on and off it easily and when sitting on it, your feet should be flat on the ground.

How do I use my walker?

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

Here are some tips:

			
<p>When standing up, always push off from the chair – don't pull on the walker to help.</p>	<p>Stay upright and keep the walker close to you.</p>	<p>If your walker has brakes, always use them when sitting down or standing up.</p>	<p>Liaise with your healthcare professional to safely learn how to use your walker.</p>