

*This information is provided for our Customers to ensure that they understand more about the products we have provided - both how they benefit the patient and how they can be safely used. If you have any questions about why this product was recommended for you or questions about a therapy regimen, please contact your physician or therapist.*

*If you have any questions or concerns about the product provided to you, please contact our office.*

## WHEELCHAIRS

### ABOUT WHEELCHAIRS

A wheelchair should provide: easy transportation, comfortable seating and as much functional independence for the user as possible.

### OPERATING INSTRUCTIONS

1. **Folding and unfolding the wheelchair:** To fold, simply lift up from under the center front edge of the seat. To unfold, tilt the chair slightly to one side to raise the wheels on the opposite side off the floor, then press down on one or both seat rails.
2. **Applying the wheel locks:** The locks are located at the front of the wheelchair next to each wheel. Push forward on the lock tips (or pull back on the pull-to-lock type), until the locks snap into the locked position. Do not attempt to enter or exit the wheelchair without having the locks securely engaged.
3. **Folding the foot plates up into a vertical position:** If the foot plates are equipped with heel loops, these must first be pulled forward over the rear of the foot plates. The foot plates can then fold up into a vertical position by lifting up on the inside edges. Always fold footplates up prior to entering or exiting the chair.
4. **Releasing and swinging away the front rigging:** Whether the wheelchair is equipped with standard foot rests or elevating leg rests, releasing and swinging away the front rigging permits much closer approaches for easier, safer transfers to beds, toilets, automobiles, etc. Activate the release mechanism at the top of the foot or leg rests and swing the front rigging around to the side of the wheelchair. While in a swing away position, the front rigging can also be removed entirely by lifting it off. This removal will make lifting or loading the chair much easier.  
From the swing-away position, the front rigging can be returned to the standard position by simply swinging it back to the front of the wheelchair. It will lock automatically in the forward position. If the front rigging has been removed from the chair, simply replace it in the swing-away position, then swing it back to the standard front position when required.
5. **Elevating leg rest adjustment:** If the wheelchair is equipped with elevating leg rests, the legs of the user can be elevated by simply lifting the leg rests up to the desired position. To lower, support the leg rest with one hand while activating the elevation release mechanism with the other and lower to the desired position.
6. **Footrest length adjustment:** The position of the foot plate on either standard foot rests or elevating leg rests is adjustable to fit the user's leg length. Adjust the foot plate support the user's foot and lower leg so that weight is carried by the thighs. Too long an adjustment will result in a line of pressure under the thigh, at the front edge of the seat upholstery. Too short will raise the user's knees and cause excessive weight to be born by the buttocks. Either situation increases the risk of pressure sores. Knees and hips should be at approximately the same level. Keep the lowest edge of the foot plate at least two inches above the floor to provide safe clearance when negotiating ramps or inclines.  
Adjustments to the foot plate are made by loosening the adjustment bolt with a wrench, telescoping the foot plate in or out to achieve the desired position, then re-tightening the bolt securely.

Customers who use wheelchairs may also be interested in other products that will further enhance safety, independence and comfort during daily activities. An area where safety and ease of use is important is the bathroom. Hand-held showers, a non-slip safety mat or safety treads, wall or tub-mounted grab bars, and tub transfer benches may be very helpful.

Other supplies and products which you may consider to help with the activities of daily living include:

Electric Bath Lift      Chair Lift      Stair Lift      Reach Extender      House and Car Ramps

Please talk to your Representative or call our office if you would like more information on any self-help products.

## WHEELCHAIRS

### OPERATING INSTRUCTIONS continued

7. **Removing and replacing detachable arms:** This feature permits lateral or sliding transfers to and from the side of the wheelchair for those users who are unable to stand briefly to transfer. Release the arm lock on the front receiver socket and lift the arm from the center to avoid binding. To replace the arm, simply reverse the procedure. Attention to the location of the rear receiver socket will make replacing the arm easier.  
Wheelchairs equipped with desk-length detachable arms permit closer approaches to tables or desks. If it is occasionally desirable to have arm support more forward on these models, this is easily accomplished by swapping sides and reversing the desk-length arms. Please Note: Reversing the arms without swapping sides will narrow the distance between the arms and could result in an accident. Wheelchairs with wrap-around or space-saver style arms cannot be reversed.
8. **Use of the tipping levers:** Although many wheelchairs are equipped with tipping levers designed to allow a caregiver or attendant to assist in negotiating curbs and other small level changes, this procedure must be performed with extreme caution and should be attempted only at the advice of your therapist or physician. Injury could result from tipping the wheelchair units rear wheels.  
Tipping levers extend from the bottom rear of the wheelchair frame, just inside the large rear wheels. The attendant should apply pressure downward with one foot on the end of one tipping lever while pressing down on the push handles of the wheelchair. This technique makes small level changes much easier. If anti-tip devices, which prevent using the above procedure, have been installed on your wheelchair, they should not be removed or adjusted without first consulting your therapist or physician.
9. **Special Features:** The driver/technician delivering your wheelchair will demonstrate the above basic operating procedures as well as any other special features or extra accessories that were ordered on the chair. These might include such things as: seat positioning or safety belts, grade aids or hill holders, anti-tipping devices, wheelchair tray, hemi or low seat frame, reclining back, and many others. Some of these accessories are provided for your safety, and the wheelchair should not be used without them in the correct functioning position.

### IMPORTANT POINTS TO REMEMBER

The user or caregiver should perform basic safety checks on the wheelchair at frequent intervals. These include:

- Check hand grips and the rubber tips on the tipping levers to ensure that they are tight and secure.
- Check the locks for proper adjustment to confirm that they lock the large wheels securely when engaged.
- Look over all nuts, bolts and attaching hardware for proper tightness.
- If the wheelchair is equipped with pneumatic tires, check for proper tire pressure.
- Check the proper footrest length adjustment.
- If any unsafe conditions are found, please discontinue use of the wheelchair and call our office immediately.

### Other points to consider:

- If the user's physical condition or body weight changes significantly, check with your physician or therapist to confirm that the present wheelchair is still appropriate.
- Remember to engage the wheelchair locks before transferring to or from the chair.
- Avoid developing pressure sores from prolonged sitting by frequently practicing some type of weight shift. Do "push-ups" by pressing down on the arm rests to lift the buttocks off the seat, or shift weight by leaning first to one side then the other.
- Do not lean forward in the wheelchair unless both feet are flat on the floor. This is particularly important for users with heavy leg casts using elevating leg rests.

Becoming familiar with the wheelchair and following the above guidelines should increase the user's mobility, comfort, safety and functional independence. Please call our office if we can be of further assistance.