

TechSAge Tips

Tools and Technologies for Wheelchair Users

Overview

Many people with multiple sclerosis (MS) use wheelchairs or other mobility aids to help them move from place to place. We interviewed 60 older adults with MS, some of whom are wheelchair users, about the challenges they experience while traveling and moving around within their homes. These are some of the unique tools and technologies that participants used in addition to their wheelchairs, which may be helpful for other people with MS to use as well.

Accessibility Rating Websites or Apps

- Accessibility rating websites and apps, such as iAccess Life, allow users to check whether a public facility is accessible for people with disabilities. The accessibility ratings are based on reviews from others who have gone to the location.

Airline App

- When traveling, airline apps can be used to select ideal seating on a flight and to identify the location of resources (such as wheelchairs and accessible bathrooms) within the airport.

Beach Wheelchair

- Beach wheelchairs have special all-terrain wheels that allow them to roll through sand. They can often be rented at beachfront venues.

Bed Rails

- Bed rails can allow people with limited mobility to move around in a bed more easily. Some also have storage pouches for keeping items close by.

Extra Long Shirts

- Brands like UNTUCKit carry extra long shirts, which some wheelchair users find more comfortable than standard shirts.

Foldable Wheelchair

- Collapsible wheelchairs can easily be stowed in vehicles or at event venues, which can be helpful when traveling.

Grocery Ordering Apps

- Delivery apps like Grub Hub or Instacart can save trips to the store. Some participants mentioned that they will ask the delivery driver to place the groceries in the entryway of their home where they can reach them more easily.

Handheld Vacuum

- Handheld car vacuums can be used to clean up small messes, which may be easier than using a full-sized vacuum.

Online Adaptive Exercise Classes

- Some organizations offer virtual exercise classes for wheelchair users, such as DailyOM's chair yoga classes and the National MS Society's exercise videos.

Portable Ramp

- Portable ramps can make non-ADA building entrances wheelchair accessible and can be collapsed and stowed away when not in use.

Reacher

- This tool is typically used to pick up items and can also be used to hold a washcloth when cleaning high or low areas in the home.

Stair Lift

- Stair lifts are used to move between floors when an elevator is not available.

Slide Board

- Slide boards can be helpful for making transferring easier. One person mentioned placing a pillowcase over their slide board before transferring to make it easier to slide from one seat to the other.

Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle

- Some wheelchair users own or rent a wheelchair accessible vehicle. One person reported owning a Jeep that has a lowering feature, which makes it easier for them to transfer into the car.



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