

Maximum Accessibility

Wheelchairs PLUS

January 2011

Wheelchair Outdoor Tips and Tricks

Using a standard or power wheelchair outdoors can be a little daunting. Dealing with traffic, uneven ground, potholes and such is scary. As all wheelchairs are top heavy there is a risk of being thrown from the chair if caution is not used.

Wheelchairs Plus has put together some tips and hints for you.

Planning and using caution in unfamiliar surroundings and terrain will help prevent falling out of the wheelchair. Sudden direction changes or uneven terrain are difficult without a strong trunk or midline reflex. When traveling down short, sharp grades watch carefully for potholes, cracks in the sidewalk, and debris in your path. Jamming the foot pedal in one of those could cause the chair to stop abruptly. You may consider using your seatbelt (if you do not have a one installed on your chair, Wheelchairs Plus can install one for you).

When approaching a long downhill grade, standard wheelchair users should start braking at the peak rather than waiting to brake after momentum has increased. Power wheelchair users have an automatic braking system therefore letting go of the joystick will stop the chair's forward motion. Many power wheelchairs have mode programmability. It is possible for a driver who goes up and down hills regularly, to have the chair programmed, by our technicians, for its safest operation in these conditions.

Due to their weight, power wheelchairs will sink easily into soft surfaces. It is best to proceed very carefully or avoid if possible any open ground, gravel driveways or dirt paths. Wheelchairs Plus can help you with ramps to go over, around or up these terrains. (See our product of the month on Page 2)



Most manufacturers recommend avoiding rain, snow, ice or operating the chair during inclement weather, as it may void the warranty. However, we live in the Northland, and it is sometimes unavoidable. Manual and power wheelchairs are extremely dangerous to operate on ice, and it should be avoided. In snow, manual wheelchairs are difficult to maneuver, and power wheelchairs become very difficult to steer. So use extreme caution, go slow and stay on cleared pathways. Snow build-up under power wheelchairs will cause corrosion of electrical parts. Carry a plastic grocery bag with you for those times you get caught in a rain storm. Sliding a grocery bag over the joystick allows it to stay protected from the rain, and still operated by your hand outside the bag!

Remember to regularly clean any wheelchair after being outside. This will help keep the dirt from working its way into areas such as motors and bearings.

SPOTLIGHT ON OUTDOORS

DOWNHILL SKIING

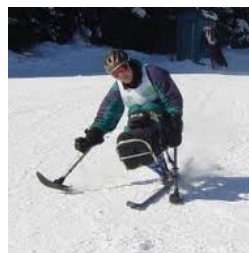
No matter what the disability, anyone can enjoy downhill skiing. The most popular equipment to assist you is the Sit-Ski. There are two types of Sit-Skis, the Mono-ski and Bi-ski. They both consist of a molded seat mounted on a metal frame. A shock absorber beneath the seat eases riding on uneven terrain and helps in turning by maximizing ski-snow contact. The skier moves his or her head, shoulders or hand-held outriggers to turn the ski. The Bi-ski is different from the Mono-Ski in the fact that it has the adaption for assistance from an instructor. Most beginners start with the Bi-Ski. Whatever your skill level go give skiing a try.

Check out the following links to area ski hills.

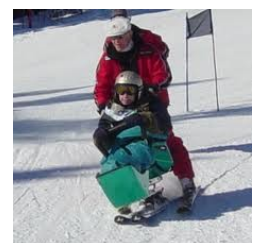
<http://www.cxcskiing.org/kb/article/aa-00359/33/giants-ridge-offers-adaptive-ski-equipment-for-physically-disabled.html>

<http://www.couragecenter.org/ContentPages/alpineskiing.aspx>

MONO-SKI



BI-SKI



PRODUCT OF THE MONTH

Ramps

Making life just a little easier are little things called ramps. The right ramp for you depends on your individual need. Wheelchairs Plus can help you figure out which ramp is best for your needs. Let's look at a few of the most common types.



Modular Ramps are commonly used as entrance ramps. These ramps can be wooden or aluminum. The all aluminum ramp makes assembly relatively easily done with common hand tools. They also require little or no site preparation.



Tri-fold Ramps are designed to easily access steps, vehicles, and raised landings. They can fold down to be carried with the attached handle. With skid resistant surface and a self adjusting bottom this ramp

is wonderfully versatile.

Suitcase Ramp has a single fold that allows for quick setup and folds in half lengthwise and carried

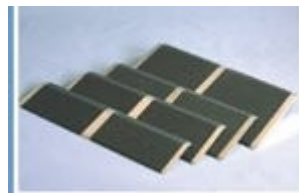
like a suitcase when not in use. It comes in 2,3,4,5, and 6 ft lengths.

The Stow & Go Rollup Travel Ramp is a compact ramp that makes traveling easier.



It fits perfectly in the trunk of a car, under the seat of a van or SUV and is easily checked at the airport. It is lightweight and compact and always there when you need it.

Lastly we have the **Threshold Ramp**. Simply place the ramp against the door threshold and have a smooth ground to sill transition. Threshold ramps come in a variety of widths and heights to



accommodate many types of doors inside and outside the home.

Wheelchairs Plus will work with you to find out which ramp or ramps will work best for you!

Monthly Drawing

Sign up to win a free 26" Reacher! Send an email with your name and phone number to laurie@wcpHello.com or cut out the sign up and drop off at any Wheelchairs Plus location. (Drawing will be held on the last day of the month.)

Name:	_____
Phone:	_____
Email:	_____

Employee Spotlight

January puts Christina VanHeldorf in the employee spotlight. She joined Wheelchairs Plus's billing department three years ago. She brought with her two years of billing experience from a hospital setting and is currently the Team Leader of the billing department.



Christina was born and raised in Deer River, MN. She graduated from Deer River High School in 2005 then went on to Itasca Community College. She studied at Itasca Community College for two years in the Chemical Engineering program before she decided that she really enjoyed working in the health care field.

With Andy, her husband of four years, serving in Iraq Christina is kept very busy with their five year old son Ashton. In fact, if you dropped in at her house you would probably catch her playing

Michael Jackson's music (her favorite artist) on the piano. She started playing piano when she was eight years old. She took a couple years of lessons but didn't like playing classical music. So, she taught herself. Now, she is slowly teaching Ashton how to play. She said he did a great job playing *Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer* for Christmas.

Christina works tirelessly at keeping up with the current insurance rules to protect you, our clients. She follows the ever changing Medicare guidelines, as well as the other major providers to assure our clients receive correct explanations and billing.

Christina says "the best part of her day is seeing the customers as they come in and being able to see, first hand, that what we do here is really making a difference in a lot of people's lives."



Roll Call

Have you recently experienced an act of kindness that you feel needs to be noted? Or do you know of someone who selflessly gives to you or others? At Wheelchairs Plus we know *the smallest gesture is what can make the wheel go round*. So we are looking for brief letters from our readers about a recent experience or encounter you have had that made a difference in your mood for the moment or possibly greater change in your life.

Selfless acts performed by kind people to either help or cheer up are all too often the littlest things that go unannounced. Whether spontaneous or planned in advance these deserve recognition. By doing so, we hope that it offers enlightenment and encouragement

for thoughtfulness, and just plain cheerfulness to spread rampantly!

Whether it be someone who simply smiles and waves at you daily at you roll by, a neighbor who takes the time to shovel your sidewalk down to the pavement so your walker rolls evenly, or the nurse who always looks you in the eye and sincerely answers your questions, please drop us a brief note and we may publish it in our newsletter. It is not necessary to use names, as it may just be a kind stranger, or you know the person prefers to be anonymous, just describing the gesture that made you smile is enough for our "Roll Call".

Send your Roll Calls to laurie.nivala@wcpmn.com

Wheelchairs Plus

LOCATIONS

St. Cloud

65 3rd St NE
Waite Park, MN 56387

Toll Free 877-882-7700
Phone 320-259-7700
Fax 866-454-6960

Bemidji 218-755-5079

Grand Rapids

502 SE 10th ST
Grand Rapids MN 55744

Toll Free 800-400-1833
Phone 218-326-1833
Fax 866-454-6960

Duluth 218-623-1028



502 SE 10th ST
Grand Rapids MN 55744