

COMMUNITY MOBILITY & ACCESSIBILITY TIPS

For Wheelchair Users

Know Your Rights:

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) helps ensure that people with disabilities have equal access to public spaces and services.

Accessible Features (ADA)

- Ramps and curb cuts
- Accessible parking spaces
- Automatic doors & elevators
- Accessible restrooms
- Accessible seating at events
- Accessible public transportation

Wheelchair Skills for Mobility

Navigating Curbs

- Performing a "wheelie" to lift the front casters over an obstacle.
- Using proper body mechanics and caregiver assistance when needed.

Important: Wheelies should only be practiced with guidance from a therapist or trained wheelchair skills instructor.

Going Up and Down Ramps

Going Up

- Lean slightly forward if appropriate.
- Maintain a steady pace.
- Avoid sudden turns.

Going Down

- Control speed.
- Lean back slightly if appropriate.
- Use caregiver assistance when needed.

Wheelchair Skills for Mobility

Hill Holders and Anti-Rollback Devices

Some wheelchairs have features that help prevent rolling backward on ramps and hills. These systems may:

- Improve safety on inclines
- Reduce effort when starting on a slope
- Increase confidence during community mobility

Ask your therapist or equipment provider whether your wheelchair includes these features.

Surfaces & Transportation

Grass: More effort, watch for holes/uneven ground.

Gravel: Casters may get stuck, can slow wheelchair movement.

Sand: Beach/all-terrain chairs are beneficial.

Vehicle: Use approved tie-downs, ensure belts are properly positioned, and follow manufacturer recommendations for transit use.

School bus: Verify securement systems and notify transportation staff of any positioning needs.

Planning Ahead

Before visiting new locations, check:

- Accessible parking & ramp/elevator
- Restrooms & door widths
- Surface types & seating
- Charging options for power chairs