

Choosing the right rollator

Its beginning to feel more like spring everyday . . . finally! Usually this time of year, everyone wants to get out to enjoy the nice weather after being cooped up indoors all winter. But for some of us this may be more difficult than before. As we age, becoming mobile is more of a challenge. But just because you can't move as quick as you once did, doesn't mean you can't enjoy getting outdoors or just becoming mobile.

These days there are lots of items available to help you become ambulatory. You can choose from a variety of items such as canes, walkers, rollators and even wheelchairs. Rollators are nice because it allows you the freedom to move around but also allows you to take a rest on the attached seat. But with all the choices out there, how can you be sure you're picking the right rollator?

First you might want to visit a place where you can try them. Give them a "test drive" and see how they maneuver. Catalogs are great, until it comes to finding the right one that will work for you. There should be someone at the facility who would be able to find the right rollator for your needs. There are multiple things you have to take into account, such as seat height, arm height, wheels, brakes, product weight, etc. The person there should be able to address all these concerns.

Some features may not seem like a big deal at the time you're making the purchase, but if you're using it every day these things can be down right irritating if you don't choose the right rollator. Bigger wheels may add weight to your new rollator, but it also allows you to go over rougher terrain. Even if you don't think you will take your rollator "off road", going over cracks in sidewalks and thresholds will be easier with larger wheels.

Let's stop on the brakes for a bit. Most rollators use the same braking concept as used on bicycles. They string the braking handle to the brake shoe via cable. These cables are notorious for getting hung on just about anything, such as doorknobs, and may ruin your brakes causing unsafe operation and costly repairs. Try finding cable-free brakes, they'll make your life a whole lot easier!

One other thing you have to be aware of before your final selection on a rollator: how does it fold? Folding is important because it will dictate how you will be able to store it when its not in use and how easy or difficult it will be to transport it so you can use it while you're shopping or visiting the doctor. Most 4 wheeled walkers do not stand when folded which means they can be in the way when not in use. Walkers with an X frame, which fold from side to side, provide the benefit of allowing the walker to stand when folded. Not all X frame walkers are equal however, some have a sling seat which can be uncomfortable.

These tips may have sparked some questions. Be sure to talk it over with someone, whether it's with a loved one or a healthcare professional. They'll want to make sure you're getting the best possible rollator for your needs.