

OPENING AND CLOSING A WHEELCHAIR

OPENING



Opening

- Put the brakes on.
- Stand in front of the chair, maintain a good posture.
- Place hands flat on the sides of the seat canvas and push down and out, keep fingers pointing into the chair to avoid entrapment.
- Unfold the backrest and lock into place.

CLOSING



Closing

- Put the brakes on.
- Unlock the backrest and fold down.
- Flip the footrests up.
- If there are handles on the seat canvas, grasp them firmly and pull them up towards you, maintain a good posture.
- If there are no handles on the seat canvas, gently bend your hips and knees and take hold of the middle front and rear edges of the seat canvas and pull up as you straighten your hips and knees.

GETTING IN AND OUT OF A WHEELCHAIR

- Align the front wheels to ensure large stable footprint of the chair.
- Put the brakes on.

- Fold up the footrests and move the footrest mechanism around to the side of the wheelchair or remove footrest mechanism if not enough room.

GETTING IN

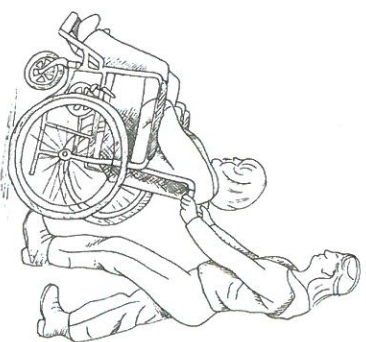
- Encourage the user to lower themselves slowly and push themselves back into the chair.
- Replace the footrest mechanism and encourage the user to position their feet. If they require assistance, remember to adopt a good posture – **DO NOT STOOP**.
- The lap strap should be fastened, it should be across the pelvis not around the waist (MHRA 2008). Encourage the user to do this. Again, if assistance is required, maintain a good posture.

GETTING OUT

- Undo the lap strap.
- Encourage the user to move forwards in the chair and push up into standing.
- Replace the footrest mechanism and lock into place.

PUSHING A WHEELCHAIR

PUSHING ON THE LEVEL



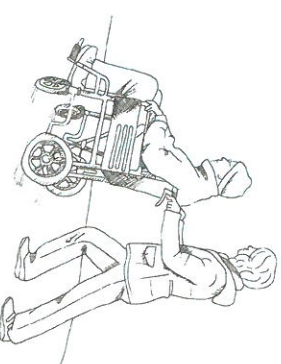
Pushing on a level

- Pre-check the route where possible, identify likely hazardous spots, alter the route if necessary.
- Stand close to the wheelchair keeping your spine upright, with your elbows slightly bent, avoid stooping and overreaching.
- Keep your elbows soft to absorb stresses.
- Use the power in your legs as you walk forward to produce forward momentum.

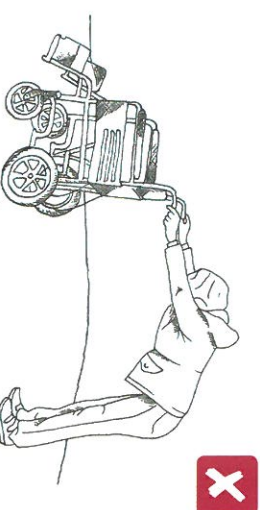
- Where possible keep the wheelchair moving as it takes more effort to stop and start, but rest if required.
- To turn the wheelchair apply pressure to one handle and the wheelchair will turn, i.e. forward pressure on the right handle will turn the wheelchair to the LEFT. Pulling on the right handle will turn it to the RIGHT. **NB NEVER TURN A WHEELCHAIR BY LIFTING THE HANDLES.**
- Regularly stretch your back muscles.

PUSHING UPHILL

- Stay as upright as possible – **DO NOT STOOP**.
- Tall people may need to push from further away than shorter people.
- Try not to stick your bottom out. For really steep slopes adopt a position with hands forwards, elbows bent and head up and a straight line from your back foot to your head.



Pushing uphill

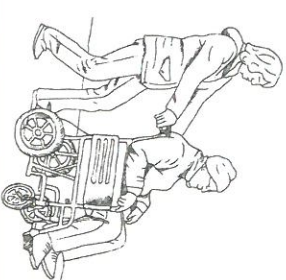


How not to push uphill

- Remain close to the wheelchair.
- Use your leg muscles to counterbalance the wheelchair.
- Lean backwards.

PUSHING DOWNHILL

- Use hand brakes, if fitted, to control speed.
- For short, steep inclines, it may be easier to go down backwards.



Pushing downhill

NEGOTIATING STEPS, KERBS AND DOORS

STEPS AND KERBS

- Avoid steps and kerbs where possible – use ramps, slopes and dropped kerbs.
- Adhere to road safety awareness.

GOING UP A STEP/KERB



Going up

- Communicate with the wheelchair user throughout the manoeuvre.
- Ensure the lap strap is fastened.
- Slowly tip the wheelchair onto the rear wheels, using the tipper bar if available and by pushing down through the handles.
- Allow for enough clearance of the front wheels over the step/kerb, lower the front wheels and push steadily forward; using momentum, the rear wheels will ride up onto the surface/pavement.
- Do not attempt to turn the chair until all four wheels are in contact with the new surface.