

Frailty Level Guide for Mobility and Assistive Aids

Frailty includes physical and cognitive decline. As dementia progresses, frailty will increase. Mobility refers to moving within one's surroundings, and mobility/assistive aids can make this easier and safer. The following guide presents options one may consider to live more independently. The mobility aid selected depends on the individual and their environment. Mobility aids used in lower frailty levels may help in higher frailty levels.

Frailty Level



4 Vulnerable – While not dependent on others for daily help, often symptoms limit activities. A common complaint is being “slowed up”, and/or being tired during the day.

Mobility and Assistive Aids

- Stair Railings
- Support Stockings
- Glasses
- Cane
- Therapeutic Shoes
- Hearing Aids



5 Mildly Frail – These people often have more evident slowing, and need help in high order IADLs (finances, transportation, heavy housework, medications). Typically, mild frailty progressively impairs shopping and walking outside alone, meal preparation and housework.

- Four-Wheeled Walker
- Bed Assist Rail
- Knee or Ankle Brace
- Bathroom Grab Bars
- Outdoor Ramp
- Bath Bench or Chair



6 Moderately Frail – People need help with all outside activities and with keeping house. Inside, they often have problems with stairs and need help with bathing and might need minimal assistance (cuing, standby) with dressing.

- Transport Chair
- Toilet Safety Rails
- Raised Toilet Seat
- Two-Wheeled Walker
- Stair Lift
- Furniture Blocks
- Toilet Commode
- Call Button
- Portable Urinal
- Handheld Showerhead



7 Severely Frail – Completely dependent for personal care, from whatever cause (physical or cognitive). Even so, they seem stable and not at high risk of dying (within ~ 6 months).

- Mechanical lift
- Bed alarm/monitor
- Transfer belt
- Hospital Bed
- Custom fit wheelchair
- Lift chair

Mobility and Assistive Aid Index

Your Physiotherapist & Occupational Therapist can help recommend the appropriate aids

Mobility or Assistive Aid

Description

Therapeutic Shoes



Therapeutic shoes are designed to support and reduce pain for individuals with health issues of the back, legs, ankles, and feet. They can reduce the risk of tripping and falls.

Stair railings



Stair railings can make it easier to climb the stairs. Having a walker or cane at the top and bottom of the stairs can make walking easier.

Cane



A **cane** is used for support and stability for standing and walking. The cane must be adjusted to the correct length. This means having the top of the cane reach one's wrist.

Support Stockings



Support stockings prevent swelling, blood clotting, or inflammation of veins. These elastic and compressive garments are worn around the leg. Higher pressure stockings need a prescription and custom fitting.

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Mobility or Assistive Aid

Description

Glasses



Glasses correct vision to produce the clearest image. If you need to wear your glasses, please use them at all times. This improves balance and safety.

Hearing Aids



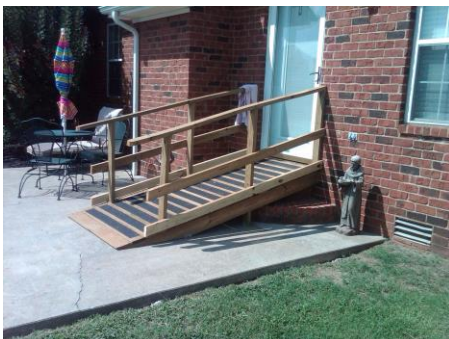
Hearing aids are small devices that are worn in or around the ear to amplify sound.

Bed Assist Rail



A **bed assist rail** can make it easier to get in and out of bed. They can reduce strain on the back, shoulders, and hips. This makes it safer to stand up and sit down.

Outdoor Ramp



An **outdoor ramp** is an inclined, flat surface that eliminates the need for stairs. It can optimize accessibility with a walker or wheelchair.

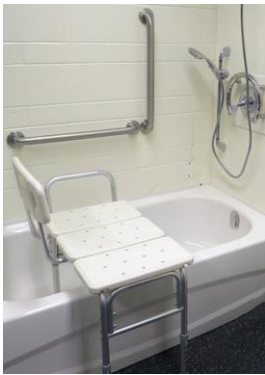
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Mobility or Assistive Aid

Description

Bathroom Grab Bars & Bath Bench or Chair



Bathroom grab bars attach to a wall to provide assistance with balance when getting in and out of the tub or shower.

A **bath bench or chair** can be helpful for people who have trouble getting in or out of the bath/shower. It allows an individual to safely bathe while sitting down, and therefore can be useful for individuals with balance and fatigue issues.

Knee or Ankle Brace



A **knee or ankle brace** stabilizes the knee or ankle joint to help prevent pain and injury. They keep the joint in an optimal position, especially when standing or walking. They can also reduce joint swelling.

Four-Wheeled Walker



A **four-wheeled walker** can provide support and reduce fatigue while walking. Benefits include swivel front wheels and a seat. They have emergency brakes and brakes that lock.

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Description

Two-Wheeled Walker



A **two-wheeled walker** can provide a stable base for standing and walking. It is primarily used for indoor mobility. These walkers are helpful when hip, knee, or ankle joints are very painful and you must put a lot of weight on your arms to walk.

Raised Toilet Seat



A **raised toilet seat** elevates the height of a toilet to facilitate getting on and off the toilet. It may come with or without armrests. It can be easier to push up from sitting than to pull yourself up with a wall grab bar.

Furniture Blocks



Furniture blocks can be used on a low chair or bed to raise the height. This makes it easier to stand up.

Toilet Safety Rails



Toilet safety rails can make getting on and off a toilet safer. They also make it easier for an individual to push up using their two arms. With toilet safety rails, an individual may require less help from a caregiver. It can also reduce risk of falls and shoulder strain for both the individual and the caregiver.

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Mobility or Assistive Aid

Description

Toilet Commode



A **toilet commode** is a portable device that can be placed wherever needed to minimize transfers for individuals with mobility limitations (e.g., it is often used by the bed at night for nighttime toileting). It can also be placed over the toilet (with removal of the pail) to provide a raised seat and armrests.

Call Button



A **call button** allows an individual to alert a caregiver when they need assistance. This device can be worn on the wrist or around the neck. Most devices automatically call for aid if someone falls.

Portable Urinal



A **portable urinal** allows an individual to urinate when they cannot get to the bathroom. This may only be required during the middle of the night, but it is good to have one on each level of the house in case of urgency.

Handheld Showerhead



A **handheld showerhead** allows water to reach all parts the body. When used with a bath bench or chair it can optimize safety, comfort, and independence.

Mobility and Assistive Aid Index

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Mobility or Assistive Aid

Description

Stair Lift



A **stair lift** can be used for going up and down a staircase if an individual has mobility limitations. It requires professional installation, but can be used independently. Having a walker or cane at the top and bottom of the stairs can make walking easier.

Transport Chair



A **transport chair** is a lightweight wheelchair that can be used for short distances. It is designed to be pushed by a caregiver. It is easier to lift/carry a transport chair upstairs or into a car in comparison to a typical style wheelchair.

Custom Fit Wheelchair



A **custom fit wheelchair** is designed specifically for an individual and may enable the individual to self-propel. It can also be pushed by a caregiver.

Lift Chair



A **lift chair** has a powered lifting system that can assist the user to a standing position. It can take the strain off family. It also allows an individual to recline, which can help to reduce leg swelling and back pain.

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Description

Mechanical Lift



A **mechanical lift** can be used to help an individual who has difficulty standing on their own, or whose weight may make it unsafe for the caregiver to lift. It is often used to get an individual from a bed to a wheelchair and vice versa.

Bed Alarm/Monitor



A **bed alarm/monitor** allows a caregiver to monitor the activity of an individual in bed. It is usually combined with a bed sensor/pad which detects the pressure on the mattress. When this pressure is removed (i.e., when an individual gets out of bed) the alarm will sound. This can help prevent falls.

Transfer Belt



A **transfer belt** allows the caregiver to safely transfer an individual from one place to another. This is used for anyone who feels unsafe while walking. It can also be used to help someone get up off the floor, without having to pull on the shoulders.

Hospital Bed



A **hospital bed** has electronic adjustability of the head, middle, and foot portions of the bed. It also has adjustable side rails. The bed is set lower to the ground while one sleeps, then raised up to get out of bed.

For more information, please visit the Alzheimer Society of Nova Scotia's website www.alzheimer.ca/ns or call us at 1-800-611-6345. The Information Sheet is not intended to replace advice from a health care professional.