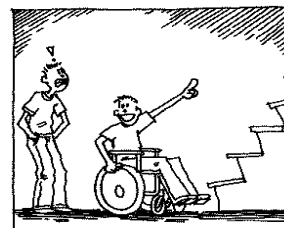


## Wheelchair Pushing

### General rules for pushing a manual wheelchair



- Try to avoid going backwards whenever possible. I like to be able to see where I am going. However, there are some situations, particularly when manoeuvring into tight spaces, when you do need to go backwards.
- Remember the wheelchair is part of my personal space. You do not always need to keep hold of it, especially when I am stopped on a flat surface. Please do not tap the handlebars.
- Always go up and down kerbs or steps 'straight on'. Not at an angle, so that the wheels go up or down together.
- The faster you push the chair, the easier it is, because the momentum will keep the chair going. When faced with an obstacle such as rough ground, thick grass, cobbles, tip the chair on the back wheels and go a little faster than usual.
- Tip the back to go up and down even small steps, over rough ground, and when going down a steep slope. With practice you will not need to slow down to do this.
- Try to walk in a straight line. If this is difficult because the pavement slopes to one side walk a little faster. If the path or pavement is heavily banked at the sides, walk in the centre (where it is flatter). It is quite uncomfortable for me to be tipped sideways for a long period.
- Avoid turning sharply or stopping suddenly. The momentum of the chair will mean that I may keep going if the chair stops! My balance is fairly good but I can still topple out sideways.
- Watch the path ahead and avoid dog dirt, vomit, potholes and puddles. If the pavement is very bumpy or there are lots of kerbs to go up and down it may be easier and more comfortable to me to go along the road.
- When walking in crowds don't go too close behind people. You may not realise how close you are and it is easy to catch their ankles. I like to be able to see ahead of me, and not just people's behinds! Where possible overtake.

- When trying to get through crowds, for instance in a busy pub, be assertive. People will not hear you if you ask them to politely move out of the way, and probably haven't noticed the chair.
- You need both hands to push a wheelchair. Use a rucksack to carry your things.
- Don't load up the back of the chair with lots of bags, unless absolutely necessary. If the back loaded up, and I get out, it will tip over backwards.

### **How to cope with doors**

#### **'Push doors'**

- Approach the door straight on
- Push the door open with the front of the wheelchair
- If they are double doors do not try to push both doors open, go to one side.

#### **'Pull doors'**

- Approach door
- Reach out and open door with right hand if right door, left hand if left door.
- Hold door open with foot
- Push chair through.
- If someone is offering to hold the door open, make sure they hold the door open and stand on the outside to allow enough room to get through, without having to go under their outstretched arm.

### **Crossing Roads**

- You do not always need to use a crossing, cross the way you would normally.
- Try to look out for dropped curbs and easy crossings, but don't go miles out of the way to find these.
- Try to let drivers see the wheelchair, and make it clear you want to cross the road. Drivers will often stop and let you across.

### **Using lifts**

- If the lift is small you will probably need to go backwards. It is usually easier to manoeuvre going backwards than forwards.
- If the door starts to close too soon, either press call button or put your foot into the door way and the doors will open again. Be careful this may not work in older lifts.
- Old fashioned or goods lifts with an inner and outer door will not go if either door is open. Make sure that both doors are closed properly when leaving the lift.