

Tips, Tricks, & Equipment

Tips:

- Do as much as you can do for yourself! You may struggle, but that is the only way you learn.
- Ask questions of other people with a SCI. You are not reinventing the wheel. More often than not, someone else has shared similar experiences and struggles.
- Have a sense of humor! *“Does this wheelchair make my butt look big?”* You have to laugh. Humor is an important part of recovery.
- Say please and thank you when you need help. It goes a long way.
- Don't have a spouse or family member be your primary care-giver. Although it is important that they know how to help you (and often they will be helping you), hiring someone *whose job is to give you assistance* will preserve the health of your relationship with the people you love.
- With people that are close to you, try to separate arguments about your care, accessibility issues, or other topics that are concerned with your injury, from your personal relationship with that individual. Learn how to treat issues like that as a separate entity, so you can disagree about something involving your SCI without spoiling your day or relationship.
- Have your bed, couch, and furniture the same height as your wheelchair so transferring is as easy as possible. You can get furniture stilts from most department stores (ex: Target, etc) to raise the height, or remove furniture legs, wheels, or frame to lower the height.
- Need help cutting up your food at a restaurant? Ask the chef to cut it up for you before being served!
- Carry a backpack in your vehicle with extra supplies in case of an emergency
- FREE parking with your disabled parking placard at parking meters.
- Airplane travel- flying is not as difficult as you may think. Just be sure to let them know you are coming and arrive at the gate early because they get you on first. Once you are all checked in they will bring you down to the door of the plane, transfer you into a skinny aisle chair and then they take you to your seat. You can tell them exactly what things you want to take with you (seat, back, arm-rest, bag, etc.) and they will check the rest and put the chair under the plane. Tell them the chair does not breakdown so it stays in one piece. When it is time to get off the plane you are the last to leave and it is the exact reverse process.
- Concerts, shows, & events- concerts and shows are lots of fun. Don't not go to a show because the tickets you have are not in the handicap section. Box offices will swap them for accessible seats when you get there. Often times buying the cheap seats and getting them exchanged for accessible seats yield a great free upgrade to better seats. Also with a bit of luck, you can call the box office directly and get accessible seats to events that are sold out to the general public.

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- All public pools built after 1991 in California must provide a lift for accessibility (hotels, apartment complexes, condo communities, public pools, etc.) See ADA Law file on Triumph's Wristband Flash Drive for building code information.

Tricks:

Daily Care

- Quads that can't hold a bar of soap can drop the soap into a tube sock and place it over their hand to securely hold the soap to wash. Or have automatic soap dispensers that you waive your hand under to release the soap.
- Urocare Sport bags with a quick release valve allows people with leg bags to wear shorts.
- Girls that wear a leg bag can swim using a belly bag to hide under their swimsuit.
- Use the Magic Bullet or Enemeez suppositories for best results doing your bowel program. Avoid over the counter suppositories as they are oil based, dissolve slowly, and often result in accidents (which is a great way to ruin your day).
- D-Mannose sugar is a great way to prevent UTI's and keep your bladder clean and healthy. D-Mannose is a simple sugar that occurs naturally in some plants, including cranberries. In the bladder, D-Mannose can adhere to undesirable foreign substances, preventing them from sticking to the lining of the bladder and preventing infections.

Clothing

- Buy shoes that are a ½ - 1 size too big. Often times are wacko movement your feet will swell in can result in any issues if your shoes are too tight. Give your feet some breathing room! Dr. Scholl's air cushions are nice too!
- Sewing your pants pockets closed gives you a clean, nice look when sitting.
- Dickies (Polyester/cotton blend) pants slide easy on a transfer board and stay looking clean.
- Putting zipper-pulls, key rings, or loops on zippers makes dressing easier.
- Need to dress up? Purchase a children's tie for a better length while sitting.

Exercise

- Focus on perfect body mechanics rather than maximizing the weight lifted.
- Use a dowel or a broom stick for many exercises.
- Use ankle weights on your arms/wrists while going through natural body movements.
- Challenge yourself to exercise in different seating positions other than your everyday wheelchair. ex: from a folding chair, on the edge of a bed or a mat, or from a long sitting position.
- Focus on posture by sitting up tall, straight, and symmetrical.
- Have someone help you move through movements that you are unable to do properly.
- Always exercise within a pain free range of motion.

Triumph Foundation does not officially endorse any products or stores mentioned on this website.

These recommendations are based off opinions of many people involved with Triumph Foundation.

If you have a suggestion that you'd like to make about adding something to this page please tell us your idea.

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- Look into getting a standing frame. Your body isn't meant to sit all the time! Standing is great for your body's digestive system, respiratory system, bone density, and more.
- Swimming pools are one of the best places to exercise.
- Get involved in wheelchair sports and adaptive recreation!

Equipment:

- Manual Wheelchair / Power Chair - having both a lightweight manual wheelchair and a power chair is optimal. Those that use a power chair primarily should have a manual chair for exercise, trunk strength training, and because a manual chair will often go places where a power chair cannot. Those that use a manual chair full time should have a power chair to use when their shoulders get tired, to use as a stable exercise platform because it gives you more support, and to use for fun (it is like having a go-cart that can go anywhere!).
- Power assist wheels and add-ons provide extra boost to each push of the wheel. Look into e.Motion, Twion, Smartdrive, Tailwind, and other brands/manufacturers.
- Great Push Gloves for quads- Tough rubber palm cuffs that protect your palms, easy to put on, and leave your fingers uncovered and free to use. www.harnessdesigns.com
- Adjustable bed- Having a bed that sits up is amazing (whether or not you are disabled).
 - Can't afford adjustable bed? Get the Mattress Genie www.contourliving.com/
 - A Sleep Number mattress has adjustable firmness settings, so you can have it firm for transfers and to exercise (like on a workout mat) or soft when you sleep to prevent pressure spots. www.sleepnumber.com
- Get a wooden sliding board that is nice and slick. Many are available in different lengths. Check out: <http://adi.stealthproducts.com/anti-slip-transfer-boards/>
- Pill organizer- keep it simple, and quit hauling around multiple pill bottles and forgetting when to take your medicine.
- Easystand's Easy Glider Standing Frame is a great standing frame that also an elliptical machine- www.easystand.com
- Find a variety of utensils, spillproof cups, and other adapted products and tools that are easy to handle www.pattersonmedical.com and www.rehabmart.com
- You will not sink with an Aquatic Head Float life vest. It keeps your head securely above the water. Great for anyone who wants to swim! www.especialneeds.com
- Airtime Watertime Floater is a new kind of flotation suit that adds buoyancy and allows people of all abilities to enjoy a truly new and unique water experience. <https://www.airtimewatertime.com/>
- The Uppertone Quad Gym enables quads to exercise independently from a wheelchair! www.accesstr.com