

Tips for In-Home Care Assistive Products

There are hundreds of products on the market that assist in making home care possible for a wider variety of needs and allowing for a longer and more comfortable stay in a home environment. Understanding a few insider tips can help to make an informed decision about which products are most appropriate for a particular situation.

COMMODOE VS. RAISED TOILET SEAT OR TOILET SAFETY FRAME



A commode can replace both a raised toilet seat and a toilet safety frame and has the additional benefit of being mobile, so can be used independently at a bedside as well.

TIPS FOR USE:

- Use next to a bed in the evenings for a senior that is at risk for falls.
- Use on one level of the home where there is no bathroom when it's difficult to manage the stairs.

TIPS FOR PURCHASE:

- A commode is generally sturdier than a raised seat but look for one with non-removable armrests and rubber tips on the legs rather than wheels, and test for sturdiness.
- Look for a commode that comes with both a pail (with lid) and a sleeve (for use over the toilet).

COST:

Commodes can cost anywhere between \$60 and \$250 or up to \$3,000 for specialized commodes with tilting mechanisms.



SHOWER BENCH VS. A SHOWER BOARD OR BATH LIFT



A shower bench is helpful for people who feel unsafe when lifting their legs over the side of the tub and greatly reduces the risk of falls when getting into and out of the bathtub.

The main benefits of shower benches over shower boards are that they have backrests and are height adjustable. Having a taller surface makes getting up from sitting easier and backrests provide more support to people that fatigue easily. Shower boards can also be difficult to fit securely to a tub.

For people that prefer a bath to a shower, bathtub lift chairs are helpful but are costly (usually between \$1,000 and \$3,000). Additionally, similar to shower boards, bathtub lift chairs can be difficult to fit securely to a bathtub.

TIPS FOR PURCHASE:

- Look for a shower bench that has a handle and backrest that can be moved around to accommodate different bathtubs.
- Make certain to also purchase a good hand held sprayer that attaches to the faucet and is easy to use.

COST:

Shower benches range from \$50 - \$200.

ROLLATOR (FOUR-WHEELED WALKER) VS. A STANDARD TWO-WHEELED WALKER



A rollator, or four-wheeled walker, includes brakes, a seat and a basket/bag, and works well both indoors and outdoors.

A standard two-wheeled walker might be more appropriate for someone who is forgetful and may have trouble remembering how to use the hand brakes on a rollator.

Additionally, individuals who need to support all or most of their weight on a walker will usually fare better with a standard walker, which won't tend to roll out from under their weight if a knee gives way.

TIPS FOR USE:

- Rollators are appropriate for elderly who need a walker for balance but do not need to put much weight onto it.
- They are also beneficial for seniors who need a seat to rest, want to carry items and want the security of having something to hold onto when walking.

TIPS FOR PURCHASE:

- The styles with larger wheels are best, as they roll easier on uneven ground and are usually more stable.
- Look for a lightweight, foldable version so that it can fit in the trunk of a car.
- Test out the hand brakes before purchase to make sure that they are not stiff or difficult to use.
- A rollator with a padded seat is nice for comfort.
- Models that allow easy access to the basket/bag while in the normal walking position are preferable.

COST:

Rollator walkers cost between \$100-600 and up, depending on the quality and features.

SHORT BEDRAIL VS. WIDE BEDRAIL



Bedrails are intended to go at the top half of a bed, beside the pillow area. The actual positioning along the bed can vary depending on the person's preference. It is important to look for a bedrail that is not too wide, or it can make it more difficult to get into bed. About 18" is a good width.

TIPS FOR USE:

- The bedrail should be positioned so the person can use it to get into bed with as few movements as possible.
- Begin with the bedrail at about mid-way to three-quarters of the way up the bed. Then adjust as needed.

TIPS FOR PURCHASE:

- Make sure the portion of the bedrail that fits under the mattress will not stick out one side or the other.
- Look for a bedrail with a soft foam handle for comfort.

COST:

Bedrails for elderly cost between \$50 and \$150.

For further tips and information on home care equipment, please contact **Independence-4-Seniors**. Besides offering traditional home care services, we can make recommendations for assistive devices, supplies and equipment and even help arrange for order and delivery.

Sources: Caring For Aging Parents, The Eldercare Team, Active Living Now