

SELECTING A MOBILITY SCOOTER

This resource aims to assist you in identifying and selecting equipment to help with mobility issues and maintaining independence.

Many daily activities require strength in the joints and muscles as well as stamina. As we age, our strength and stamina decreases. This is a normal part of the ageing process and is often intensified by conditions such as arthritis and respiratory conditions.

When getting out and about becomes increasingly difficult, help and assistance from a family member may be required, however, there is a wide range of equipment that may help you continue to carry out these tasks independently.

1 MOBILITY SCOOTERS

If you have reduced mobility or feel unstable or insecure whilst walking, particularly when travelling any distance a mobility scooter may be helpful.

Mobility scooters have been designed to ensure that older people and those with mobility issues can travel longer distances with little effort.

Mobility scooters come in 2 categories:

'Class 2' – these cannot be used on the road (except where there isn't a pavement) and have a maximum speed of 4mph

'Class 3' – these can be used on the road and have a maximum speed of 4mph off the road and 8mph on the road

Class 2 mobility scooters do not need to be registered and do not require a tax disc. Class 3 mobility scooters require a 'nil value' tax disc and must be registered with the DVLA. For more information on the rules of a class 3 mobility scooters please visit: <https://www.gov.uk/mobility-scooters-and-powered-wheelchairs-rules>

2 INDOOR*/OUTDOOR SCOOTERS (CLASS 2)



2.1 Boot/Portable Scooters

Boot/portable scooters are lightweight and fit easily into the boot of your car. They are straightforward to dismantle making it the ideal companion for shopping trips and holidays. Boot/portable scooters are defined as class 2.



2.2 Mini Scooters

Mini scooters are used for indoor/outdoor use and are designed for assisting you indoor (shopping centres) as well as out and about.

These scooters can be quickly and easily dismantled for transportation. Mini scooters are defined as class 2.

**Not recommended for domestic environment, indoors refers to shopping centres etc.*

3 OUTDOOR SCOOTERS (CLASS 3)



3.1 Outdoor mobility scooters

Class 3 mobility scooters are useful for outdoor use only. These scooters are intended for pavement and road use, with a maximum speed of 4mph on the pavement. In addition class 3 scooters can be used for further afield journeys giving you freedom and independence. (Range of up to 34 miles / 55km).



3.2 Outdoor mobility scooters HD (heavy duty)

Heavy Duty Class 3 mobility scooters are required for outdoors use only but have an increased maximum user weight. These scooters have a maximum speed limit of 4mph for pavement and 8mph for road use. In addition class 3 scooters are intended for further afield journeys additional giving freedom and independence.

4 FEATURES TO CONSIDER WHEN CHOOSING A SCOOTER

4.1 Size

The size of the scooter will determine its ground clearance, turning circle, overall dimensions, and maneuverability. It is important to ensure that the driver sits comfortably, and that he/she can reach and use the controls. Always try the scooter before purchase. A scooter should not tip during sharp turns or on inclines.

4.2 Wheels/Tyres

The size of the wheels on a scooter determines the ability of the scooter to mount obstacles and affects its comfort and stability. Smaller wheels are generally found on scooters intended for indoor use. The larger the wheels, the more stable the scooter, and the larger and wider the tyres, the greater the ability of the scooter to manage kerb climbing and to be driven on rough terrain.

4.3 How many wheels?

The number of wheels affects the scooter's performance.

- Four wheeled scooters tend to be more stable than those with three wheels especially for kerb climbing and turning sharp corners.
- Three wheeled scooters tend to be more maneuverable i.e. have a smaller turning circle.

4.4 Type of tyres

There are different types of tyres including:

- Pneumatic tyres, which need to be inflated regularly to maintain air pressure, and also need to be checked as they can puncture. They give a more smooth and comfortable ride and better traction on kerbs, slopes and rough ground than solid rubber tyres. Punctures can be repaired in a similar way to bicycle tyre punctures.
- Solid tyres do not puncture or need inflating and may make it easier to maneuver on some surfaces. However there will be some sacrifice in ride comfort.

4.5 Brakes

All scooters have automatic brakes which come on immediately when the user releases the accelerator control.

Some models have the option of a handbrake, which acts directly onto the tyre when stationary. Therefore, the tyre pressures must be kept firm. Although not essential, this provides extra security.

4.6 Controls

Acceleration on a scooter is controlled by a single proportionally controlled lever (i.e. the greater the pressure applied to the lever, the faster the vehicle moves). This may be situated on the right or left hand side, or both sides of the tiller. This lever is often controlled by thumb movement or by squeezing (rather like the action required applying a bicycle cable brake). This may be difficult for people who have poor flexibility or little strength in their hands, so it is important to try before purchase.

4.7 Speed control

Some scooters have a speed limiter which determines the maximum speed to which the scooter can accelerate. The speed dial allows more varied and accurate control of maximum speed. Another safety feature to look out for is automatic speed reduction on corners.

4.7 Distance/Range



This is the manufacturer's prediction as to the scooter range under optimum conditions with new batteries on a full charge. Range can be affected by:

- Condition of batteries - older, well used batteries will not store as much power.
- Weight of user - the heavier the person the more power will be used.
- Terrain - climbing hills and kerbs uses up more power.
- Accessories - lights and indicators are powered by the wheelchair batteries.
- Weather - batteries do not perform as well in cold weather.

4.8 Gradient



This is the manufacturer's prediction as to the maximum gradient under the best conditions, taking into account the user's weight, temperature, surface etc.

4.9 Heaviest component

Scooters can be dismantled for transporting and storage. However, the components still tend to be heavy. Check the weight of the heaviest component and compare it to the weight of a bag of sugar, which weighs only 1kg.

5. Accessories

In addition to the standard features, manufacturers offer a range of optional accessories, including crutch and cane holders, oxygen bottles carriers, front and rear baskets, as well as canopies.

5 PURCHASING A SCOOTER THROUGH THE MOTABILITY SCHEME

The Motability Scheme enables disabled people to lease a new car, scooter or powered wheelchair by exchanging their Government funded mobility allowance.

If you receive either of the following, you may be eligible to join the Motability Scheme:-

- Higher Rate Mobility Component of Disability Living Allowance
- Enhanced Rate of the Mobility Component of Personal Independence Payment (PIP)
- War Pensioners' Mobility Supplement (WPMS)
- Armed Forces Independence Payment (AFIP)

Motability scooters and powered wheelchairs are available on a three year lease (five years for some custom-built powered wheelchairs). This means that you lease the product and arrange for the relevant amount of your allowance to be paid direct every four weeks.

Most Motability scooters and powered wheelchairs cost less to lease per week than your mobility allowance, so the remainder of your allowance continues to be paid direct to you, to spend as you wish. The cost of your Motability scooter or powered wheelchair includes insurance, breakdown cover, maintenance, servicing, tyre or battery replacements.

If you are eligible for the Scheme you should visit your local Motability dealer and arrange an appointment with their Motability Specialist. As part of your appointment you can arrange test drives and your dealer will take you through a questionnaire.

To find out more about the scheme, including your nearest Motability dealer, please visit www.motability.co.uk

6 Next steps

Please contact Invacare Customer Services on 01656 776 222 and find out your nearest Invacare Dealer and test drive the Scooter that meet your needs, customized to your own preference.

Useful sources of information

Disabled Living Foundation

www.dlf.org.uk

Age UK

www.ageuk.org.uk

Arthritis Care

www.arthritiscare.org.uk

Motability

www.motability.co.uk

This guidance is not meant to replace advice or assessment by a healthcare professional. If in doubt of the support that you require, please contact a Healthcare Professional. More detailed information can be found in the AskSARA tool

For more detailed information you can always AskSARA – an interactive guide to selecting the right equipment for you.
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