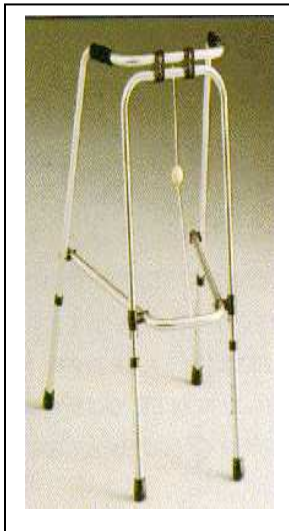


## Walking Frame and Wheeled Walker Selection

Many people require extra support from a mobility aid for safety and stability when walking. This fact sheet specifically discusses the types and features of walking frames and wheeled walking aids. It is important that the correct aid is selected to suit an individual's abilities and personal requirements. It is recommended that the advice of a physiotherapist is sought to assist in selecting the most appropriate aid for an individual and for advice regards to correct use of the selected equipment.



### WALKING FRAMES

Walking (or hopper) frames provide a wide base of support for increased stability and balance. They also enable the user to take some weight through their arms. They are generally height adjustable and therefore can be fitted to the users specific requirements.

Folding frames are available for individuals who need to transport their walking aid.

Reciprocal frames are a type of walking frame. They have hinges at the front to allow each side to be moved forward independently. They are designed to allow a walking pattern closer to normal. It is recommended that advice is sought regarding the correct method of use of this equipment as incorrect use could lead to falls.



### WHEELED WALKING FRAMES

Wheeled walking frames also provide increased support when walking. Unlike static frames, they allow the user to maintain a normal walking pattern and speed. The use of a wheel walker requires better balance, as well as greater strength and coordination in the upper limbs, than the use of a walking frame.

There are many different styles and features of wheeled walkers to consider when selecting the most appropriate one for an individual. Below some of these factors are discussed.

### CASTORS

Steel or plastic castors are suited only to indoor use. Rubber, micro cellular and pneumatic castors may be more suitable for outside. Larger diameter castors are less likely to get caught on small bumps and may also be more suitable to outside.



### NUMBER OF WHEELS

Frames with two wheels at the front and two stoppers at the rear may provide more resistance to forward movement and stopper brakes are easily applied. They may also be easier to use if the user has difficulty lifting a hopper frame.

Three wheeled frames provide less stability than two or four wheeled frames, but have better manoeuvrability, especially in confined spaces.

Four wheeled frames with pivoting front castors provide good manoeuvrability as well as stability.



### BRAKE SYSTEM

Some wheeled walkers have a cable style braking system similar to that found on a bicycle. Others have a brake system that is activated by pushing down on the handles of the walker. This causes stoppers, situated between the back castors, to make contact with the ground therefore stopping movement of the walker.

### FRAME

Both folding and non-folding models of walking aids are available.



### SEAT

Many four wheeled walkers have a seat to allow the user to rest for short periods.

### FOREARM WALKERS

Forearm walkers are a type of wheeled walker that provides greater support than a standard wheelie walker. The arm troughs support the area in a more upright position and allow the user to take greater weight through their arms.



### OPTIONS AND ACCESSORIES TO SUIT WHEELED WALKERS INCLUDE:

1. Carry bags, baskets and trays to assist in the transport of items.
2. Walking stick holders allow a walking stick to be carried on the side of the frame.
3. Oxygen bottle carriers can also be purchased to fit onto some walkers.

### NEED TO KNOW MORE?

Telephone, fax or e-mail your enquiry to obtain further information from one of the therapists about products. Alternatively, you can make an appointment to trial the equipment at our display centres or through our outreach service. Please phone LifeTec for further details.

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#### LifeTec Queensland

Email: [mail@lifetec.org.au](mailto:mail@lifetec.org.au)  
[www.lifetec.org.au](http://www.lifetec.org.au)

Independent Living Centre  
Association of Queensland  
Incorporated trading as LifeTec  
Queensland ABN 25 773 960 273

#### TOWNSVILLE

Shop G-3A, Domain Central  
103 Duckworth Street  
(PO Box 8280), Garbutt, Townsville Qld 4814  
Phone: 07 4759 5600  
Facsimile: 07 4759 5688

**BRISBANE**  
Level One, Reading Newmarket  
Cnr Newmarket & Enoggera Roads  
(PO Box 3241), Newmarket Qld 4051  
Phone: 07 3552 9000 or 1300 885 886  
Facsimile: 07 3552 9088

