



How to use a Rollator safely

MS Ireland
MoveSmart



What is a rollator?

What are the benefits?

A rollator is a four wheeled walking aid that allows the following benefits:

- Increase support in standing and walking
- Allows a seat to rest during longer distances
- For outdoor and indoor walks
- Takes pressure off one or both legs if needed
- The ability to carry things on the basket or seat for transfers



To know how to use one safely, you will need to know all the parts



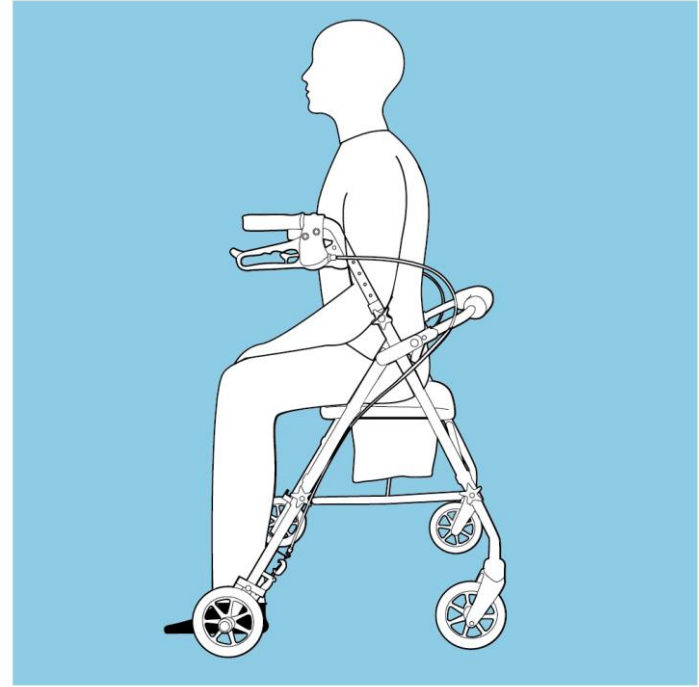
How to Measure a Rollator to Suit You:

Seat to floor height: While the person is standing with their normal shoes on, measure the height from the floor to the crease in the back of their knee. This measurement tells us the required height for the rollator seat.

Handle Height: Have the person standing with their normal shoes on, arms by their side with their elbow slightly bent. The handles on your rollator should be the same height of your wrist.



Measuring Height



Safety tips when using your rollator

Standing up from a bed or chair:

- Make sure the brakes are locked down prior to standing
- Always push off the surface you are sitting on
- Never pull on the rollator as it may tip back and may cause injury
- Once standing, place each hand on the handgrips

Sitting down:

- Turn with the rollator until the bed or chair is touching the back of your legs
- Make sure to click down on brakes
- Reach back slowly to the chair's arm rests and sit down in a controlled manner



Sitting Down



Standing Up



Safety tips when using your rollator!

Walking:

- Before walking, make sure the brakes are released slightly, but always keeping some pressure on them
- Push the rollator forward and approach it by putting one foot in front of the other
- Once you've stepped inside the rollator, your feet should be just inside the wheels
- Avoid overstretching and placing the aid too far in front



Stair Climbing:

- NEVER use rollator on a stairs
- Consider having two rollators, one upstairs and one downstairs if required



Safety Tips!

- **Slopes:**
 - When you are walking with your rollator make sure to always have a slight pressure on the brakes
 - Therefore, on a slope, you should apply more pressure on the brakes than usual and/or have someone beside you to hold the front bar



Safety Tips!

Kerbs

Going up a kerb →

- Tilt the frame back to lift front wheels up onto kerb, followed by the back wheels
- Make sure all four wheels are up on the same level, away from edge and then squeeze brakes before taking any steps
- “Good leg up to heaven, Bad leg down to hell”
- When going up on a kerb, good leg first

Going down a kerb →

- slowly and gently lower the frame down. Ensure all four wheels on same level surface
- Squeeze brakes
- “Bad leg down to hell”
- Bad leg down first, slowly lowering yourself down from kerb



Safety tips when using your rollator!

- **Turning:**
- When turning with your rollator move it as you turn
- Avoid twisting back
- Keep handles parallel to your body and slowly turn
- Try to turn in a circle and not on the spot
- **Walking on uneven surface e.g. grass:**
- Make sure your wheels are large enough to go over uneven surfaces
- Slowly approach the area and watch out for hazards



More Safety tips....

Never abandon your rollator

Always bring the rollator with you when walking

Make sure your rollator is easily accessible to you at any time you need it

Never step around your rollator. Always bring the rollator with you for the whole activity/journey

Balance First

Always make sure you are balanced and stable before taking off with your rollator



Safety is Key

- Footwear is an important factor when using a rollator. Comfort is essential
 - Make sure that your shoes fit correctly
 - You do not want your foot slipping out of the shoe or feeling too big
- Always Stay Focused:
 - When using your rollator, try to focus on you and the rollator and where you need to go
 - Try not to be thinking of 5 things at once as this can cause you to lose focus and concentration which can lead to an increased risk of falling
- Have a checklist before you walk;
 - Am I safe?
 - Check brakes
 - Am I fully concentrating on this walk or is my mind elsewhere?
 - Check position of your feet



Evidence supporting rollators in comparison to other gait devices: (Mundt et al, 2019)

- Mundt et al, (2019) is a systematic review that compares walking sticks, crutches, frames, and rollators
- **Stick versus rollators:** Walking speed was decreased when using a stick. However, both led to improved step length and better balance
- **2 Crutches versus Rollators:** Crutches caused asymmetrical walking pattern. Rollator maintained symmetrical pattern of step length, stance, swing duration and leg speed
- **Frames** caused an asymmetric walking pattern like crutches. Therefore, leads to reduced speed and step length
- **2 wheeled walkers** needed to be lifted before moving which led to a decrease in walking speed and shorter step length



References:



(No date) *Safety information leaflet: Four wheeled rollators - oxford health NHS ...* Available at: <https://www.oxfordhealth.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/OP-101.15-Safety-information-leaflet-four-wheeled-rollators.pdf> (Accessed: 17 May 2023).



Mundt, M. *et al.* (2019) 'Walking with rollator: A systematic review of gait parameters in older persons', *European Review of Aging and Physical Activity*, 16(1). doi:10.1186/s11556-019-0222-5.



Eitzen, A. *et al.* (2016) 'The development of an observational screening tool to assess safe, effective and appropriate walking aid use in people with multiple sclerosis', *Disability and Rehabilitation: Assistive Technology*, 12(6), pp. 641–646. doi:10.1080/17483107.2016.1217085.

