

Getting a wheelchair into a car





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Rica is a charity that researches and publishes independent information on products and services for older and disabled people.

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Getting a wheelchair into a car

A guide for older and disabled people

About this guide

This guide describes what is available to help transport a wheelchair or scooter in a car.

In the first part we describe the kinds of solution you can get, to help you choose the right one for you. In the second part we give some detailed information about currently available products.

Finally we give some general information about driving with a disability and where to go for more help.

This guide covers:

- ramps which help in getting a wheelchair or scooter into the boot
- hoists and lifts which lift a wheelchair or scooter into the boot of a vehicle
- stowage systems which transfer a manual wheelchair into the back of a vehicle or onto the roof
- vehicles which allow users to travel in their wheelchair
- other ways of loading a wheelchair including trailers and racks.

Whatever type of equipment you want, it is worth talking to a Mobility Centre (see page 28) about the alternatives. Some centres have hoists and other equipment you can try out. Some also carry out assessments to see what kind of equipment may suit you. Talk to a few suppliers too – tell them about your car, your wheelchair and your disability.

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Note: Some of the products listed in this guide can also be used with mobility scooters.

Which type?

There are four main options which can help make it easier to transport a wheelchair. Use the tips to decide which is best for you.



RAMP Page 5

- use with manual chair, power chair or scooter
- need to walk to your seat, or have a helper
- wheelchair stored in boot
- ramps can be portable

HOIST OR LIFT Page 6

- use with manual chair, power chair or scooter
- need to walk to your seat, or have a helper
- wheelchair stored in boot





STOWAGE SYSTEM Page 8

- use with manual or lightweight electric wheelchair
- transfer from wheelchair to seat
- wheelchair stored on roof, in boot or in back

WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBLE VEHICLE Page 9

- use with manual or power chair
- entry by ramp or lift
- remain in chair
- driver and passenger types available





OTHER SOLUTIONS Page 10

- trailers, racks and bags
- need to walk to your seat, or have a helper

Ramps

Portable ramps are carried in the boot and hook on the back of the vehicle. You push the wheelchair up the ramp, or run it up under its own power if it is electric. You can fit an electric winch to your vehicle to help.

Ramps are a (comparatively) cheap way of getting a wheelchair into a car if you have the dexterity and a large enough vehicle. They are widely available from adaptation suppliers. To make them easier to carry, many fold in half or are telescopic. Some have carrying handles so that they can be carried fairly easily by an able bodied person.

Unless you have someone to help you at all times, you will need to be able to get the ramp out and put it in position, and put it away afterwards. You also need to be able to make your way round to the driver's seat once your wheelchair has been stowed.

Check that there is enough room to get the ramp in the car easily when the wheelchair is loaded. Ramps need to be secure. Some have pins which slot into locating holes drilled into the vehicle floor. This is recommended. Also make sure the ramp is secured for the journey.

The ramps have sides which help keep the wheelchair in line. For wheelchairs you can use two narrow 'channel ramps' (see top right). Make sure the channels are wide enough to allow the castors to turn. If you have a three-wheeled scooter you need a wide ramp (see picture) or three channel ramps. Look for a ramp which is wide enough to take the wheels easily. Check that the side guards are high enough to

stop the chair from falling and that they do not catch the underside of the chair when you are pushing it up.

Ramps often need to be quite long – so that they aren't too steep. You need to have enough room behind your car for the whole length of the ramp, plus the length of the wheelchair.



Folding channel ramps. From about £300



Telescopic ramps. About £100 – £500



Wide ramp. From about £200-£400

Hoists and lifts



Two-way hoist from Autochair £650



Some hoists can be fitted to almost any vehicle and others are made for larger vehicles such as estates, 4x4s or MPVs.

Using a hoist

You will probably need to use both hands to use the hoist. You also need to be able to stand without much support while you are hooking on and lifting the wheelchair.



Four-way hoist from Brig-Ayd, £1,530

You may have to fold or dismantle the chair before you lift it, especially if you have a small car or a large or heavy wheelchair or scooter.

There are different ways of attaching the hoist to the wheelchair. Some hoists have open hooks and others use hooks which close. If you have limited grip or dexterity, you may find that closed hooks are more awkward to use. Open hooks are easier but can come off when the lifting cord is slack. If the hook has a spring, try it out – see whether you need both hands, or if you find your fingers get caught easily. You need to use both hands for some hoists – one to hold it in the right place to stop the hooks falling loose, and the other to take up the tension with the control unit. This may be difficult to do standing if you have poor balance. Nearly all suppliers provide a range of hooks, so discuss what you need with them before you buy and make sure you try all the functions.



Control unit

Most hoists have hand held control units. Some are attached by wires but others are cordless. On a few hoists, the control is fixed to the hoist's arm or base, which means you can hold on for support while you are using it. Some people find these easier to use than a hand held control. Most suppliers have a choice of switches and should be able to find something to suit you. Try the control before you buy.

On some hoists, you have to remove the lifting arm when the wheelchair is stowed in the boot.

If you are travelling without your wheelchair, some hoists allow you to remove the swinging arm to get it out of the way, leaving more room for luggage. The removable parts can be heavy, especially on heavier-duty hoists. Some cannot be taken out of the car because the lifting cords are permanently threaded through them.

Information about currently available hoists is given in the tables on pages 14–17.



Platform lift from Alfred Bekker, £1,998

LIFTS

You can also use a platform lift to load an unoccupied wheelchair or scooter into the boot. You bring the platform out of the boot under power, push or drive the wheelchair on and secure it and then transfer it back into the boot.

This may be easier than a hoist, because you don't need to fold or dismantle the wheelchair or scooter. You also don't need the same strength or dexterity to load the wheelchair, and you can secure the wheelchair to the platform before loading.

Platform lifts are generally used for larger wheelchairs and scooters and they need quite a large load space. The boot needs to be at least 120cm wide, and at least 70cm deep. In some cars you may have to remove the back seats.

You also need the same amount of room behind the vehicle to load the wheelchair onto the lift platform.

Information about some platform lifts is given on page 18.

Stowage systems



AbiLoader, available from Steering Developments, from £9,300 fitted (see page 19)

These systems make it possible to stow a manual wheelchair in the car (boot or back seat area) or on the roof after you have transferred onto your seat. You don't need help to do this, and you don't need to be able to walk round the car.

Most can be fitted to either the driver's or the passenger's side of the car. The Roof Spider (page 22) can pick up a wheelchair from both sides of the car so you can alternate between driving and travelling as a passenger.

Once you have transferred into the seat you use a switch to bring the hoist mechanism to the door. You hook the wheelchair on by hand. The hoist then lifts the chair on to the roof or transfers it to the back of the car and secures it safely.

You have to attach the wheelchair to the hoist. Some are easier than others (with some rear-loading systems you just need to position the wheelchair in the right place), but for all of them you need to be able to twist into position to do this.

With a rooftop system the boot of your car remains free to carry other luggage. However, they do increase the height of the car, and some need significant headroom to stow the wheelchair (so they can't be used in indoor car parks for example). You can see how much headroom they each need on pages 19–23.

Most rooftop systems carry the wheelchair in a box. With others the chair is exposed to the weather. Rooftop systems can be fitted to most cars without any modification.

Boot-loading systems are slightly less flexible in that the boot has to be large enough, and the right shape. Systems that stow the wheelchair in the rear seat area can be fitted to a limited range of vehicles, and require considerable modification.

Information about stowage systems is given on pages 19–23.

WAVs

(WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBLE VEHICLES)



I Can from Sirus Automotive from £33,295

Specialist firms convert MPVs, vans and other vehicles so that you can get in and travel in your wheelchair. If you travel as a passenger you usually sit behind the front row of seats, but some designs allow you to sit beside the driver.

Drive from WAVs are designed so that you drive from your wheelchair. They can be fitted with a wide range of hand and other controls – this will be done as part of the conversion, which will be tailored to suit you and your wheelchair. A few WAVs are designed so you transfer to the driver's seat once you are inside.

WAVs either have a ramp or a lift. All lifts are powered but some ramps are deployed by hand – you will need help with this. If you use a ramp, a winch can be fitted to help get you in (only suitable if someone helps you, as you won't be able to attach the winch yourself). All drive-from wheelchair WAVs are designed to be used without help so the doors open and the ramp unfolds at a touch of a button.

The number of passengers a WAV can carry depends on the base vehicle and the



InFront Doblo from Wilson Healy from £19,995

conversion. Some carry just the driver and a passenger in a wheelchair, but some will carry five or more additional passengers. Some WAVs have folding or removable rear seats that can be used when a wheelchair is not being carried.

You go in at the rear or the side of the vehicle. Side-entry WAVs can be easier for on-street parking (because you don't need so much room behind, and you don't have to get your wheelchair into the road), but you may not be able to use them in all car parks. The InFront Doblo has a specially adapted front door that lets you enter directly into the front passenger space.

See our Wheelchair accessible vehicles guide (see page 35) for more information or contact converters (see our Mobility address list) for detailed information on the vehicles they supply. Always try out a WAV you are considering – converters will bring a demonstration vehicle to you. The Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles Converters Association (see page 34) requires its members to provide this service and to meet other service standards.

Other solutions

There are other ways of carrying a wheelchair in a car. You can use a rack mounted on the roof or the back of the car, or attach a trailer. The L.I.T.E. bag helps you lift a wheelchair into the boot.

RACKS AND TRAILERS

Racks and trailers let you carry a wheelchair without dismantling or folding it, while keeping the boot free.

Trailers can easily carry large items including mobility scooters. A full car driving licence will let you tow one if the weight of the trailer and its load is under 750kg. However, they will make reversing and parking difficult.

The Chairack (from G Bernard Elliot) is an alternative to a roof rack. It is designed to load a folded manual wheelchair onto the back of a car without you having to lift it. The frame clamps on to the towing ball using its own locking mechanism. Then you fit the wheelchair front castors on to the rack and lever the wheelchair up using the rack's handle.

In both cases, you may need a lighting board and number plate if the one fitted to your vehicle is obscured.



Wheelchair loaded on Chairack £145

L.I.T.E. BAG

The L.I.T.E. bag is a large canvas bag that can accommodate most folded manual wheelchairs. It's designed to allow you to tip the wheelchair into the boot, so you don't have to carry its whole weight at any point. It also protects your car against damage.



L.I.T.E. Bag RRP £65 from Biston (07710 275795) and selected suppliers

Choosing and fitting

Your abilities

- Whatever option you go for, you need to know that you can use it every time you go out in the car, even on a bad day.
- Make sure you know exactly what you need to do to load and secure your chair, and make sure you can do it comfortably and safely. When using a hoist, you also need to secure the hoist itself. Sometimes it stays attached to the chair, which holds it securely, but some need to be detached and secured separately.

Your car and equipment

- Make sure the car you choose has enough space for all the equipment you need, and anything else you want to carry. Where will you put your shopping?
- If you have to fold or dismantle your chair, can you do it? Can you pick up the heaviest part?
- Check the weight of any equipment you use. Try our online database for information on powered wheelchairs and scooters (www.rica.org.uk/pwcs). If you're using a hoist, check with the supplier that it can take the weight of your wheelchair. Check the car can take the weight of the hoist and wheelchair together, and check its towing weight if you're using a trailer (ask the car dealer).
- Some hoists and other equipment can only be fitted to a limited range of cars.
 Check with the supplier.

Most suppliers will adapt equipment to suit you, your car and your wheelchair. Discuss what you need with the supplier before you start.

Fitting

- Hoists, lifts and stowage systems are usually installed by vehicle adaptation companies or by their local dealers. Some will come to you to fit the hoist. Otherwise you will have to arrange for your car to be taken to them. Our Mobility address list (see page 35) lists adaptation companies.
- Most hoists can be fitted to the right or left hand side of the boot check with the supplier. Some hoists come in one size. Some are cut and shaped individually for each car to give as much room as possible for swinging the wheelchair in.
- Some stowage systems require considerable modification of the car, which may not be reversible.
- Winches need to be fitted correctly. It's especially important that the winch cable is aligned with the vehicle, so it pulls the wheelchair in a straight line.



Here we list the suppliers who make or import the equipment listed in this guide. Some of them fit equipment themselves, and they all sell their equipment to adaptation companies, who may be more local to you.

Contact the supplier for more information about their products and to find a local installer. You'll find a complete list of adaptation companies in our *Mobility address list* (see page 35).

Adaptacar

Tel 01769 572785 **Email** sales@adaptacar.co.uk www.adaptacar.co.uk

Alfred Bekker

Tel 01377 241700 **Email** info@alfredbekker.com www.alfredbekker.co.uk

Autoadapt UK

Tel 0121 333 5170 **Email** contact@autoadapt.co.uk www.autoadapt.co.uk

Autochair

Tel 01773 830222 **Email** demo@autochair.co.uk www.autochair.co.uk

Brig-Ayd Controls

Tel 01707 322322 **Email** sales@brig-aydcontrols.co.uk www.brig-aydcontrols.co.uk

Bristol Street Versa

Tel 08433 081 814 **Email** sales@kcmobility.co.uk www.bristolstreetversa.com

Cowal Mobility Aids

Tel 01494 714400 **Email** sales@cowalmobility.co.uk www.cowalmobility.co.uk

G Bernard Elliot

Tel 07974 258585 **Email** info@gbelliott.co.uk www.gbelliott.co.uk

Elap Mobility

Tel 08000 433159 Email mail@elap.co.uk www.elap.co.uk

PB Conversions

Tel 01525 850588 **Email** pbconversions@aol.com www.pbconversions.co.uk

Steering Developments

Tel 01442 212918 **Email** enquiries@steeringdevelopments.co.uk www.steeringdevelopments.co.uk

Techmobility

Tel 01376 564499 **Email** phil@techmobilityuk.com www.techmobilityuk.com

Safety

SECURING

It's important to secure all equipment when the car is moving. Otherwise it could cause severe injuries if you have to brake suddenly. Ask the adaptation company about this.

Ramps

You will have to secure both the wheelchair or scooter and the ramp.

Two-way hoists

You will also have to secure the wheelchair or scooter and, with some hoists, the lifting arm too. Some hoists come with securing mechanisms built in.

Four-way hoists and lifts

Four-way hoists and lifts do not require you to secure the wheelchair. It remains attached to the hoist, which is secure.

WAVs

WAVs come equipped with restraints for the wheelchair and for the passenger. Both should be used properly at all times.

Restraints

Many of the hoist suppliers mentioned in this guide and in our *Mobility address list* sell securing devices, although prices vary widely – from £25 to over £100.

The main specialist suppliers of restraint systems are Q'Straint (01227 773035, www.qstraint.com) and Unwin Safety Systems (01935 827740, www.unwin-safety.com).

TESTING

A number of hoists were tested for the first edition of this guide. They all passed tests for electrical safety, and none had hidden hazards. There was no danger of the wheelchair dropping if power failed. It is possible to hit your head on the arm of the hoist by mistake. If you think this is likely and your hoist is not padded, ask the supplier to provide some form of cushioning.

MAINTENANCE

All of the hoists tested were strong enough to stand up to several years of use. All of the electric motors passed our endurance tests and laboratory engineers judged that they needed minimal maintenance. We have no reason to think that the hoists described in this guide are any less robust than they were when tested or that newer models are likely to be less good.

However it is always important to inspect all equipment, including ramps, winches, hoists and stowage systems, regularly for damage. Your supplier will advise you about what to look out for, but check:

- cords and winch cables for fraying
- nuts and bolts for tightness
- moving parts for lubrication
- for unusual noises when operating.

Products

The following pages contain information about products: technical information, availability and price.

WHEELCHAIR AND SCOOTER HOISTS	Distributed by (see page 12 for contact details)	Max weight lifted (kg)	Price inc fitting [1] 2-way/4-way £	To what kind of vehicle can the hoist be fitted [2]	Control type	Do you have to remove parts of the hoist?	Weight of heaviest removable part (kg)	Securing 2-way hoist (and notes)
Autochair Mini-Hoist 40kg	Autochair	40	795/1165	H/E/4/M	hand held wired, cordless option	yes, arm	n/a	attach karabiner to frame
Carolift 40	Autoadapt UK	40	846/-	S/H/E/4/M	fixed to hoist	yes	11	hoist folds flat
Elap V40	Elap Mobility	40	805/-	S/H/E/4/M	fixed to hoist arm, cordless option	no	n/a	none
Junior 40kg	Alfred Bekker	40	765/1025	H/E/4/M	hand held wired, cordless option	yes	6	fold flat and secure
Mini-Hoist	Techmobility	40	575/-	S/H/E/4/M	hand held wired	yes, arm and actuator	2.5-4.5	lift off arm and secure
Wheelchair Hoist 40kg	Brig-Ayd Controls	40	700/-	H/E/4/M	fixed to hoist arm	no (folds)	n/a	fold flat and secure
Wheelchair Hoist 75kg	Brig-Ayd Controls	75	850/-	H/E/4/M	hand held wired	yes, arm	6	use motor to lower to floor and secure
Autochair Mini-Hoist 80kg	Autochair	80	895/1095	H/E/4/M	hand held wired, cordless option	yes, arm	n/a	attach karabiner to frame
Mini 80kg (Fixed)	Alfred Bekker	80	-/1140	H/E/4/M	hand held wired, cordless option	yes	5.7	use motor to lower to floor and secure
Mini 80kg (Folding)	Alfred Bekker	80	-/1260	H/E/4/M	hand held wired, cordless option	yes	6.1	use motor to lower to floor and secure
Wheelchair Hoist 80kg	Brig-Ayd Controls	80	-/900	E/4/M	hand held wired, cordless option	yes, arm and motors	5	lower to floor and secure
Midi-Hoist	Techmobility	80	765/1090	S/H/E/4/M	hand held wired	yes, arm and actuator	2.5-4.5	lift off arm and secure
Carolift 90	Autoadapt UK	90	-/1586	H/E/4/M	hand held wired	no	n/a	n/a
Carolift ASL-325	Autoadapt UK	90	805/-	S/H/E/4/M	fixed to hoist arm	yes, arm	6	use motor to lower to floor and secure
Autochair Olympian Hoist 100kg	Autochair	100	-/1045	H/E/4/M	hand held wired, cordless option	yes, arm	4	attach karabiner to frame

Footnotes [1] Prices may vary – depending on supplier [2] S = saloon, H = hatchback, E = estate, 4 = 4x4, M = multi purpose vehicle/people carrier. This is for guidance only. Always check that the hoist is suitable for both your specific vehicle and wheelchair.

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WHEELCHAIR AND SCOOTER HOISTS	Distributed by (see page 12 for contact details)	Max weight lifted (kg)	Price inc fitting [1] 2-way/4-way £	To what kind of vehicle can the hoist be fitted [2]	Control type	Do you have to remove parts of the hoist?	Weight of heaviest removable part (kg)	Securing 2-way hoist (and notes)
Mini 100kg	Alfred Bekker	100	1060/1255	H/E/4/M	hand held wired, cordless option	yes	9.4	use motor to lower to floor and secure
Powered Boot Hoist 100kg	PB Conversions	100	-/1250	H/4/M	hand held wired	no	n/a	use locking pin or thumb screw
Wheelchair Hoist 100kg	Brig-Ayd Controls	100	1262/950	E/4/M	hand held wired, cordless option	yes, arm	4	use motor to lower to floor and secure
Mini 120kg	Alfred Bekker	120	-/1150	H/E/4/M	hand held wired, cordless option	yes	8.4	use motor to lower to floor
Telescopic Wheelchair Hoist 120kg	Brig-Ayd Controls	120	-/2419	E/M	hand held wired	yes, arm	4	n/a
Wheelchair Hoist 120kg	Brig-Ayd Controls	120	-/1050	E/4/M	hand held wired, cordless option	yes, arm and motors	5	lower to floor and secure
Maxi-Hoist	Techmobility	130	875/1200	S/H/E/4/M	hand held wired arm and actuator	yes	2.5-4.5	lift off arm and secure
Adaptacar Wheelchair Hoist	Adaptacar	140	1171/1945	E/4/M	hand held wired	yes, arm	17	hook to eyelet on floor and raise with motor
Carolift 140	Autoadapt UK	140	-/1637	E/4/M	hand held wired	no	n/a	n/a
Autochair Olympian Hoist 150kg	Autochair	150	-/1245	H/E/4/M	hand held wired, cordless option	yes, arm	4	n/a
Mini 150kg	Alfred Bekker	150	-/1285	H/E/4/M	hand held wired, cordless option	yes	9.4	use motor to lower to floor and secure
Powered Boot Hoist 150kg	PB Conversions	150	-/1420	H/4/M	hand held wired, cordless option	no	n/a	use locking pin or thumb screw
Wheelchair Hoist 150kg	Brig-Ayd Controls	150	-/1050	E/4/M	hand held wired, cordless option	yes, arm	4	n/a
Wheelchair Hoist	Bristol Street Versa	150	965/1205	E/4/M	hand held wired	yes, arm	20	has locking pin
Carolift 6000	Autoadapt UK	180	-/1794	E/4/M	hand held wired	no (folds)	n/a	n/a
Carolift 6900	Autoadapt UK	180	-/2546	E/4/M	hand held wired	no (folds)	n/a	includes telescopic adjustment
Carolift VSL 570	Autoadapt UK	180	1291/-	E/4/M	hand held wired	no (folds)	n/a	fold flat and secure
Autochair Olympian Hoist Footnotes [1] Prices may vary – dep vehicle/people carrier. This is for guid				H/E/4/M	hand held wired, cordless option	yes, arm	4	n/a

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PLATFORM LIFTS

Platform lifts are designed to fit in MPVs, large estates and vans. All require quite a large space – in some vehicles you will have to remove the rear seats.





BACKPACKER

Price including fitting: £1,998
Max weight lifted (kg): 114/147

Platform size (cm): 69x120/77.5x155

Space required

(h x w x d cm): 102x122x122 Distributor: Alfred Bekker

JOEY LIFT

Price including fitting: £2,395
Max weight lifted (kg): 159
Platform size (cm): 69x112

Space required

(h x w x d cm): 102x112x115 Distributor: Autoadapt UK

STOWAGE SYSTEMS

These systems make it possible to stow a wheelchair in the car or on the roof after you have transferred into the car seat. You don't need help to do this.





ABILOADER (boot loading hoist)

Price including fitting: £7,500

Max weight lifted (kg): 25

Manufacturers say it will

take any folding or fixed manual chair
and some power chairs

Weight of hoist (kg): 50

Distributed by: Steering Developments

Automatic boot loading system with automatic boot opener/closer. There are separate models for folding/fixed frame wheelchairs. Can be used with power chairs (up to 25kg).

Automatically stores and secures wheelchair in boot and returns it to driver or passenger door when required.

Like all boot-loading systems, requires level boot floor (no sill) and high opening.

AUTOCHAIR LIGHT (rooftop hoist)

Price including fitting: £3,485

Max weight lifted (kg): 20

Max size of folded chair
(h x w x d cm): 96x37x87

Clearance travelling/
in use (cm): 44/137

Weight of hoist (kg): 50

Distributed by: Autochair

The Autochair Light moves to a vertical position, and a hoist inside the unit lowers a hook. You hook on the folded chair by hand and the motor winches it into the box. The box then moves to its horizontal travelling position.





BRAUN CHAIR TOPPER (rooftop hoist)

Price including fitting: £3,488
Max weight lifted (kg): 20

Max size of folded chair

(h x w x d cm): 83x36x93

Clearance travelling/

in use (cm): 54/54 Weight of hoist (kg): 55

Distributed by: Autoadapt UK

A motor slides the box across the roof so it is above the car door. A hook comes down which you can attach by hand to the wheelchair. The chair is winched up into the box, which moves back to its travelling position. The footplates do not have to be removed.

COWAL GZ-91 (rooftop hoist)

Price including fitting: £4,250 Max weight lifted (kg): 33

Manufacturers say it will

take any folding manual chair

Clearance travelling/

in use (cm): 46/71

Weight of hoist (kg): 55

Distributed by: Cowal Mobility Aids

The box lid opens and a frame is lowered to the ground by power. You push the folded chair on to the frame and it is hoisted into the box.





EASYLOADER (rear seat loading hoist)

Price including fitting: £4,575/£4,875
Max weight lifted (kg): 20/38
Distributed by: Autochair

AUTOCHAIR LIBERTY

Price including fitting: £3,525
Max weight lifted (kg): 35

Max size of folded chair

(h x w x d cm): 115x38x115

Clearance travelling/

in use (cm): 50
Weight of hoist (kg): 45
Distributed by: Autochair

This hoist lifts the folded chair into the rear seat space of the car. It's designed for vehicles with a rear sliding door, but some four-door cars can be converted – the rear door has to be modified.

You place the chair on the mechanism and it pivots it into the car. The rear seats (or the larger section of a split seat) have to be removed. Operation is via a hand held control.

Operation is via a hand held control. You position the wheelchair next to the driver door and attach it to a grip. The wheelchair is then lifted into the box by a motor.

The box opens from the side rather than the top, so it can be used in garages and multi-storey carparks.





ROOF SPIDER (rooftop hoist)

Price including fitting: about £3,400 Maximum weight lifted (kg): 25

Clearance travelling/

in use (cm): 42/112 Weight of hoist (kg): 54

Distributed by: Autoadapt UK

SLIDING DOOR AND ARM (rear seat loading hoist)

Price including fitting: about £5,800 Distributed by: Autoadapt UK

You press a button on the wired hand control corresponding to the side of the car you want to load the wheelchair from. The box opens and the lifting device lowers. You fold the wheelchair around the device and press another button to load it into the roof box.

With this you can load a wheelchair into the rear compartment of a 4-door car after transferring to the front seat.

The rear door has to be modified. Autoadapt can fit a sliding door, with a power door opener. The rear seats (or the larger section of a split seat) will have to be removed.



WYMO ROOFTOP STOWAGE HOIST (rooftop hoist)

Price including fitting: £1,750
Maximum weight lifted (kg): 20

Clearance travelling/

in use (cm): 32/84 Distributed by: Cowal Mobility Aids

You plug the cable into the hoist and into the cigarette lighter (a hard-wired version is available for an extra £75).

The hoist is lowered and you hook on the chair by hand. You winch the chair part way by power, lean out to attach a strap, raise the chair, fix the other end of the strap and hoist up. There is no box so the wheelchair is open to the elements.

Finance

DISABILITY BENEFITS

The Disability Living Allowance (DLA) is an allowance paid to all disabled people to help with extra costs. It is made up of a care component and a mobility component. A lower or higher rate of each is paid, depending on how much help you need. DLA also works as a gateway to other services (eg Blue Badges, the Motability scheme).

Since April 2013, DLA has been replaced by the Personal Independence Payment (PIP) for new claimants aged 16 or over. If you already get the DLA, you will be reassessed to determine the level of payment you will receive under the PIP but this process will not start until October 2013.

There are currently no plans to change the DLA for people under 16. You will need to be assessed for PIP when you turn 16.

MOTABILITY



Tel 0845 456 4566

Textphone 0845 675 0009

If you receive the Higher Rate Mobility Component of the DLA or the Enhanced Rate Mobility Component of PIP you are eligible for the Motability scheme. Your allowance goes towards the cost of a car, powered wheelchair or scooter.

You can use the mobility allowance to lease a new car from Motability for three

years (five years for a wheelchair accessible vehicle). Maintenance and servicing costs, insurance for two drivers (up to two additional drivers can be added for a fee) and RAC breakdown assistance are included. There is a mileage allowance of 20,000 miles per year (additional miles are charged at 5p per mile).

You can choose a model from any of the main manufacturers. If you choose one that is more expensive than is covered by the mobility allowance, you make an advance payment with your own money (the amount varies, depending on the car). Motability offers over 450 cars which require no advance payment.

Adaptations

The Motability Scheme will also cover, or contribute to, the cost of adaptations (such as hoists or swivel seats). Motability has a list of available adaptations, with costs attached (many are free). They operate a Managed Adaptations Programme which can make the process both easier and cheaper. You can only make use of this programme when you are ordering your new car.

If you want to fit your own adaptations during your lease, or fit something not available through the programme, you will have to fund this yourself. Motability administer a number of funds (see Grants) which may be able to help. Any adaptations must be supplied and fitted by a Motability Adaptations Partner.

Grants

Motability administer the government Specialised Vehicle Funds as well as having their own charitable fund.

If you are considering the Motability Scheme you can apply for a grant for things like adaptations, advance payments on more expensive vehicles and driving lessons (for people under 25). You have to provide details of your circumstances, which will be checked. Motability can only help towards the least expensive solution that meets your needs. They will assess your needs and make suitable recommendations.

OTHER SOURCES OF FINANCE

Charities

Some charities give grants to individuals.

- Your local library should be able to help you find sources, such as the Round Table, Rotary or Lions Club and other local charities.
- Try your appropriate disability group such as Scope, the MS Society or the Muscular Dystrophy Campaign, who may know of sources of help.
- If you are aged 50 or over,
 Charity Search provide a free service to
 help you find a grant-giving charity:
 Freepost (BS 6610)
 Avonmouth
 Bristol BS11 9TW
 Tel 0117 982 4060
 (9:30 to 2:30 Mon–Thurs)
 Email info@charitysearch.org.uk
 www.charitysearch.org.uk

- Turn2us provides a free service to help you find financial support in the form of welfare benefits, grants and other help tailored to your circumstances.
 Tel 0808 802 2000 (8–8 Mon–Fri) www.turn2us.org.uk
- The Family Fund helps families who are raising a disabled or seriously ill child aged 17 and under. Families must have proof of entitlement to benefits or tax credit. They give grants for a range of essential items, and may be able to contribute to the cost of adapting a Motability car if Motability funding isn't available.

4 Alpha Court
Monks Cross Drive
Huntingdon
York YO32 9WN
Tel 08449 744 099
Fax 01904 652 625
Textphone 01904 658 085
Email info@familyfund.org.uk
www.familyfund.org.uk

Statutory sources

- Social services may be worth trying, especially if you do not get DLA/PIP or if you have already used your mobility component to lease a vehicle.
- Access to Work if you are in work or are applying for a job you may be able to get help from the Access to Work scheme. They may cover the cost of adaptations to a vehicle if this is the only or most cost effective way for you to get to work. Cases are assessed on an individual basis. Contact your local Jobcentre Plus or visit www.gov.uk/access-to-work

BUYING SECONDHAND

You can buy adapted vehicles and equipment secondhand. Anything you buy secondhand may be affected by safety and reliability issues. For secondhand vehicles, the seller may have had an inspection carried out and/or offer a warranty. If not, you may want to think about carrying out your own inspection.

Some suppliers will fit secondhand hoists for you. Remember to allow for any fitting costs.

Classified advertisements

The following websites carry listings for adapted vehicles and equipment.

The Disabled Living Foundation (see page 33) also has a list of sources of secondhand equipment.

Disability Now

www.disabilitynow.org.uk/listings/classifieds

Disability Equipment Register www.disabilityequipment.org.uk

Disabled Gear

www.disabledgear.com

eBay

www.ebay.co.uk

Mobility Choice Motoring

www.mobilitychoicemotoring.co.uk

Preloved

www.preloved.co.uk



Mobility Choice Motoring



Disabled Gear

VAT

You do not pay VAT on products designed and sold specifically for disabled people. This means all adaptations, installation, repair and maintenance are zero-rated.

What kind of adaptations count?

- Those which make it possible for you to get in and out of the vehicle, such as a swivel seat.
- Those which make it possible for you to drive, such as hand controls for primary driving controls and infra red systems for secondary controls. Note that standard extras such as automatic transmission would not be enough to qualify.
- Those which enable a wheelchair to be carried in the vehicle, such as a hoist. Trailers, roof or rear racks would not count as they are not vehicle adaptations.

Adaptations have to be permanent – which means in practice that they have to be welded or bolted on. Repair and maintenance to the vehicle is also zero rated. The supplier of the vehicle has to be satisfied that you qualify, and you will have to sign a form declaring your disability.

Wheelchair and stretcher users

Additionally, if you use a wheelchair or stretcher you may not have to pay VAT on the price of the car or for its repair or maintenance.

To qualify you must:

- be a wheelchair user temporary users do not count and nor do scooter users or
- need to be carried in a stretcher.

The car must:

- have been designed or substantially and permanently adapted for the person who normally uses a wheelchair or stretcher
- have a carrying capacity of no more than 12 people
- be for domestic or personal use.

Vehicles owned and run by businesses do not qualify. However you can use a qualifying adapted vehicle for work if this is incidental to its main private use.

VAT relief applies only to new cars, so if you are buying a car with the intention of having controls fitted, it may be worth your while to consider buying a new car rather than a secondhand one as you will not have to pay VAT on the car.

More information: see VAT notices 701/7 (adaptations) and 1615 (motor vehicles) from the HM Revenue and Customs national advice service:

Tel 0845 010 9000 www.hmrc.gov.uk.

Important

- You must buy and adapt the vehicle at the same time you cannot get a VAT refund for adaptations made later.
- Alterations made to a car before it is registered in your name have to have *type approval*. In practice this means that it is only legal to fit these adaptations after registration. You have to register the car, have it adapted and then pay for it.
- Talk to the firm who is adapting your car they will be able to make appropriate arrangements.

The law

DRIVING LICENCE

Mobility Centres or disabled drivers' organisations (see page 30) will be able to help you find a driving instructor who specialises in teaching disabled drivers. They use cars with adapted controls or will teach you in your own car.

Drivers of adapted cars take the same test as everyone else. If you drive an adapted car and you have advised the Driving and Vehicle Licensing Agency, details will appear in code form on your licence. The adaptations recorded are: modified transmission, modified clutch, modified braking and acceleration systems, modified control layouts, modified steering, modified rear view mirrors and modified driving seats. You can only drive cars with similar equipment.

There's no top age limit to driving. You have to renew your licence at 70 and every three years after that. A form will be sent to you by the DVLA.

You must tell them of any disability when applying for a licence for the first time. You must also tell them if you have a new medical condition or one which has got worse since passing your driving test or since your last licence was issued. Conditions you have to tell them about include fits or blackouts, seizures, diabetes, angina attacks which are provoked by driving, memory problems, stroke, brain injury, brain surgery, pacemaker, difficulty in using your arms or legs and any visual condition which affects both eyes.

You may be sent a questionnaire and will be asked to give permission for the Medical Advisor to contact your doctor or specialist. If your driving licence is for automatic cars only, you must make sure the clutch pedal is removed if you have adapted a manual gearbox. Read more at www.direct.gov.uk/driverhealth or in What you need to know about driving licences from a post office.

VEHICLE EXCISE DUTY (ROAD TAX)

You don't have to pay Road Tax if you get the Higher Rate Mobility Component of the DLA, the Enhanced Rate Mobility Component of PIP or the War Pensioner's Mobility Supplement.

If you are not the driver you have to provide the name of whoever will drive for you. The vehicle must be registered in your or your nominee's name. It must be used only by you or for your benefit – such as to do your shopping. Anyone can drive it as long as they are insured.

To claim, get an exemption certificate from the Disability Benefits Helpline (08457 123 456) or the Service Personnel and Veterans Agency (0800 169 2277). You can then get your free tax disc at post offices which issue road tax, or by post. If the dealer is registering your new vehicle for you, you will need to let them have your certificate. Renewals can be made online.

Motability vehicles (see page 24) don't need a certificate – the tax disc is arranged by Motability.

INSURANCE

Under the Equality Act, insurers are not allowed to refuse disabled drivers insurance or charge extra without justifying evidence. Premiums must be based on a reasonable assessment of risk. Insurers will take account of any DVLA restrictions on your licence, but this is not in itself justification for a higher premium. However, you may have to pay more:

- while you are adjusting to a new disability if there is evidence that this will increase the risk
- to cover any extra cost of repairing an adapted vehicle.

As with all insurance, shop around to get the best deal. If you feel you are being charged more for your policy than other drivers in similar circumstances, ask the insurance company for details of why they consider you to be a greater risk. Mobility Centres and organisations of disabled drivers have lists of specialist insurance companies.

We know of the following companies which specialise in insurance services for disabled people:

Chartwell	0800 0890146
■ En-route	0800 7837245
First Senior	01582 840067
■ Fish	0800 0883050
Lockton	0845 6028000
Premier Care	01476 591104

BLUE BADGE SCHEME



The Blue Badge Scheme offers parking concessions for disabled people with severe walking difficulties who need to park close to their destinations. The scheme also applies to registered blind people, people with severe upper limb disabilities in both arms who regularly drive a car and children under three with specific medical conditions.

You can use designated disabled parking bays in car parks and on the street, park for up to three hours on single and double yellow lines and often park for free in local authority car parks and bays (check first, as some local authorities still charge). In Central London boroughs, parking is only in designated bays.

The scheme is administered by local authorities which deal with applications and issue badges.

For more information contact your local authority or go to www.gov.uk/apply-blue-badge or www.dft.gov.uk (follow the link for the blue badge scheme).

Useful organisations

MOBILITY CENTRES



There are 16 Mobility Centres in the UK. They give practical and independent advice and assessment to disabled drivers and passengers. They will assess your ability to drive, advise you about cars that might suit you and about any adaptations you may need. They are well informed on motoring and disability issues generally. Each centre has expert and friendly staff who are likely to have met and solved similar problems before. They are non commercial and impartial.

An assessment for a driver referring him or herself will cost from £50 to £130 (depending on the centre). In Scotland assessment is free if referred by a GP. Costs for assessment as a passenger are lower – generally around £20–£50. Motability customers may qualify for a free assessment under the Managed Adaptation Programme.

Mobility Centres are accredited by the Forum of Mobility Centres and have certain minimum standards. For more information on the centres contact:

The Forum of Mobility Centres c/o Providence Chapel, Warehorne Ashford, Kent TN26 2JX **Tel** 0800 559 3636 **Email** enquiries@mobility-centres.org.uk www.mobility-centres.org.uk

Key to services

The centres vary in the services they offer. This key shows what's available:

- I free information service
- advice on choosing a vehicle, driving it, driving controls and learning to drive
- P assessment and advice about getting in and out of vehicles, loading of wheelchairs and other equipment
- W advice on selecting and using a wheelchair or scooter
- T driving tuition for new drivers, people returning to driving and those who will be using different controls
- A fitting adaptations for drivers or passengers

Bristol

Living Mobility & Driving Centre The Vassall Centre, Gill Avenue, Fishponds Bristol BS16 2QQ

Tel 0117 965 9353

Fax 0117 965 3652

Email mobserv@thisisliving.org.uk www.thisisliving.org.uk

Services: I D P W T

Cornwall

Cornwall Mobility Centre, Tehidy House Royal Cornwall Hospital, Truro TR1 3LJ **Satellite centres** Exeter, Holsworthy, Liskeard, Plymouth

Tel 01872 254920

Fax 01872 254921

Email

enquiries@cornwallmobilitycentre.co.uk www.cornwallmobilitycentre.co.uk

Services: I D P W T A

Derbyshire

Derby DrivAbility

Kingsway Hospital, Kingsway

Derby DE22 3LZ

Tel 01332 371929

Email dhft.driving@net

www.derbydrivability.com

Services: IDPT

Hampshire

Wessex DriveAbility

Leornain House, Kent Road, Portswood

Southampton SO17 2LJ

Tel 023 8051 2222

Email enquiries@wessexdriveability.org.uk

www.wessexdriveability.org.uk

Services: IDP

Hertfordshire

Hertfordshire Action on Disability (HAD)

The Woodside Centre, The Commons

Welwyn Garden City AL7 4DD

Satellite centre Dunstable

Tel 01707 324581

Fax01707 371297

Email driving@hadnet.org.uk

www.hadnet.org.uk

Services: IDPWT

Kent

South East DriveAbility

Kent Community Health NHS Trust

St Lawrence Avenue, Allington

Kent ME16 OLL

Satellite centres Hailsham, Herne Bay,

Canterbury, Uckfield

Tel 01622 606900

Fax 01622 606901

Email kcht.sedriveability@nhs.net

www.kentcht.nhs.uk/home/our-

services/south-east-driveability

Services: I D P W T

Lancashire

Wrightington Mobility Centre

Wrightington Hospital, Hall Lane

Appley Bridge, Lancs WN6 9EP

Satellite centre Tyldsley (Manchester)

Tel 01257 256409

Fax 01257 256538

Email mobility.centre@bridgewater.nhs.uk

Services: I D P T

Norfolk

East Anglian DriveAbility

2 Napier Place, Thetford IP24 3RL

Satellite centres Coggeshall, Spalding,

Wakes Colne

Tel 01842 753029

Fax 01842 755950

Email mail@eastangliandriveability.org.uk

www.eastangliandriveablity.org.uk

Services: IDPWT

North East

North East Drive Mobility,

Walkergate Park Centre for Neurorehabilitation and Neuro-psychiatry

Benfield Road

Newcastle upon Tyne NE6 4QD

Satellite centre Penrith

Tel 0191 287 5090

Email northeast.drivemobility@ntw.nhs.uk

www.ntw.nhs.uk

Sercieces: I D P T

Surrey

QEF Mobility Services

1 Metcalf Avenue

Carshalton, Surrey SM5 4AW

Tel 020 8770 1151

Fax 020 8770 1211

Email mobility@qef.org.uk

www.qefd.org

Services: IDPWT

West Midlands

Regional Driving Assessment Centre

Unit 11, Network Park

Duddeston Mill Road, Birmingham B8 1AU

Satellite centres Cannock, Hull,

Northampton, Oxford, Worcester

Tel 0845 337 1540

Fax 0121 333 4568

Email info@rdac.co.uk

www.rdac.co.uk

Services: IDPT

West Yorkshire

The William Merritt Centre

Disabled Living Centre and Mobility

Service

St Mary's Hospital, Green Hill Road

Armley, Leeds LS12 3QE

Satellite centres Sheffield, York

Tel 0113 305 5288

Email mobility.service@nhs.net or

andrew.dalton2@nhs.net

www.williammerrittleeds.org

Services: IDPW

NORTHERN IRELAND

Disability Action, Portside Business Park 189 Airport Road West, Belfast BT3 9ED

Satellite centres Ballymena, Newry,

Carrickfergus, Omagh, Fermanagh

Tel 028 9029 7880

Fax 028 9029 7881

Email mobilitycentre@disabilityaction.org

www.disabilityaction.org

Services: IDP T

SCOTLAND

Scottish Driving Assessment Service

Astley Ainslie Hospital

133 Grange Loan

Edinburgh EH9 2HL

Satellite centre Mobile Driving Assessment

Service

Tel 0131 537 9192

Fax 0131 537 9193

Email

marlene.mackenzie@nhslothian.scot.nhs.uk

Services: IDP

WALES

North Wales Mobility and Driving

Assessment Service

Disability Resources Centre

Glan Clwyd Hospital

Bodelwyddan

Denbighshire LL18 5UI

Satellite centre Newtown

Tel 01745 584 858

Fax 01745 535 042

Email mobilityinfo@btconnect.com

www.wmdas.co.uk

Services: IDPWTA

South Wales Mobility and Driving

Assessment Service

Rookwood Hospital

Fairwater Road

Llandaff

Cardiff CF5 2YN

Satellite centre Pembroke

Tel 029 2055 5130

Fax 029 2055 5130

Email sandra@wddac.co.uk

www.wmdas.co.uk

Services: IDPT

OTHER ORGANISATIONS

Assist UK



National network of centres offering advice on independent living equipment. Your local centre can advise

about wheelchairs and accessories.

Tel 0161 238 8776

Email general.info@assist-uk.org www.assist-uk.org

Disability Now

A monthly online newspaper published by Scope with reviews by disabled people and classified advertisements. www.disabilitynow.org.uk

Disabled Living Foundation



Advice and information on disability equipment. They have a database of products and suppliers. Ground Floor, Landmark House Hammersmith Bridge Road London W6 9EJ Tel 0845 130 9177 (weekdays 10am to 4pm) www.dlf.org.uk www.livingmadeeasy.org.uk

Disabled Motoring UK



The campaigning charity for disabled DISABLED HOTORING UK motorists. They run the

Baywatch campaign against parking abuse and represent disabled people's needs at a national level. Membership, £20 per year (£30 for joint members), includes a monthly magazine, advice service and member benefits. Ashwellthorpe, Norwich NR16 1EX Tel 01508 489449 Email info@disabledmotoring.org

www.disabledmotoring.org

Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency

Drivers Medical Group DVLA Swansea SA99 1TU Tel 0300 790 6806 Fax 0845 850 0095 Email eftd@dvla.gsi.gov.uk www.dft.gov.uk/dvla/medical.aspx www.gov.uk/driving-if-disabled

Northern Ireland

Driver and Vehicle Agency Drivers Medical Section County Hall, Castlerock Road Coleraine BT513TB Tel 0845 402 4000 Email dvlni@doeni.gov.uk www.dvani.gov.uk

GOV.UK

A website providing information about public services. They have useful sections on motoring and on disability. www.gov.uk/browse/disabilities

Mobility Roadshows



Have a wide range of adapted cars and mobility products to see and try.

Manufacturers and organisations are on hand to give advice and demonstrations.

Roadshows are free.

Mobility Choice

Tel 01344 750400

Fax 0845 241 2136

Email choice@gtnet.gov.uk www.mobilityroadshow.co.uk

Motability One Big Day

Motability run these regional events for users or prospective users of the scheme – you can see and try cars and equipment **Tel** 0800 953 4002 www.motabilityevents.co.uk

Remap



A voluntary organisation of engineers who invent, design and

make devices or carry out adaptations to help disabled people to be more independent or to enjoy leisure activities.

England, Wales and NI

D9 Chaucer Business Park Kemsing, Kent TN15 6YU Tel 0845 130 0456 Fax 0845 130 0789 Email info@remap.org.uk www.remap.org.uk

Remap Scotland

The website has a useful map showing the locations of local groups.

Forgue House, Forgue, Huntly AB54 6DA **Tel** 01466 730 736

Email remap-scotland@btconnect.com www.remap-scotland.org

Service Call



A service that allows disabled people to use petrol stations and other services that are

difficult to access. You carry an infrared transmitter (£14.95 inc p&p), which you use to signal that you need assistance at participating outlets, which include thousands of petrol stations, banks, supermarkets, shops and others.

Tel 0800 458 3008 **Email** info@service-call.net

www.service-call.net

Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle Converters' Association



The trade association for companies who make and sell WAVs. WAVCA aims to improve the quality and safety of WAVs

and lobbies for legislation for wheelchair passenger vehicles.

Members must:

- have been trading for at least 2 years
- offer at least 3 years warranty
- have passed safety tests on restraints and seat belts
- demonstrate a commitment to customer service.

Email enquiries@wavca.co.uk www.wavca.co.uk

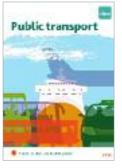
Rica guides

All these guides are available in print and online at www.rica.org.uk. We also have two online search tools: one for cars and one for scooters and powered wheelchairs



FAMILY CARS

Issues affecting families of disabled children and information about cars and standard and specialist equipment.



PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Overview of public transport with information about access, journey planning, concessions, assistance and how to complain.



CAR CONTROLS

In depth information on types of adaptations and how to get them. It covers simple and more complex conversions.



GETTING IN AND OUT OF A CAR

Techniques that may help as you get older; helpful equipment and details of lifting systems if you need more help.



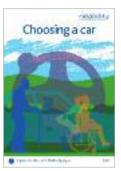
WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBLE VEHICLES

Information on vehicles converted to allow you to travel in your wheelchair, as a passenger or driver.



MOBILITY ADDRESS LIST

Addresses of all adaptation suppliers, fitters and converters in the UK and the services they offer.



CHOOSING A CAR

Things to think about if you have a disability, details of features that may help you and ways of adapting a car to suit your needs.

SEVEN SHORTER GUIDES

- Motoring after an amputation
- Motoring after a brain injury
- Motoring after a stroke
- Motoring with arthritis
- Motoring with cerebral palsy
- Motoring multiple sclerosis
- Motoring with restricted growth

Motability has teamed up with leading home, pet and travel insurers

■ For full details of the Motability Insurance range visit www.motability.co.uk or call direct:

Motability HOME Insurance Motability PET Insurance Motability TRAVEL Insurance

0800 369 9094 0800 519 9957

0800 783 0061

■ For every policy sold, the insurance providers will pay a proportion of the premium in commission to Motability to help disabled people remain mobile.





Consumer research for older and disabled people

Rica is an independent research charity that publishes practical consumer information

Rica
Unit G03 The Wenlock
50–52 Wharf Road
London N1 7EU
Tel 020 7427 2460
Fax 020 7427 2468
Textphone 020 7427 2469
Email mail@rica.org.uk
www.rica.org.uk



This organisation has been scriffed as a producer of reliable health and social core information.

reserved entered and a served of the served

Research Cassie Barton,

Jasper Holmes

Design **Price Watkins**

Photography Robin Beckham and

credited converters

Cover illustration Michael Munday

Printing WPG

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