

# Getting on and off the toilet

**If you are having difficulty getting on and off the toilet, this information sheet covers some equipment that may assist.**

**Our trained Occupational Therapist can also provide advice on equipment that best suits your needs and home.**

## **Most toilet equipment:**

- Makes the toilet seat higher, and/or
- Gives you something to hold onto when standing up and sitting down.

Some equipment does one of these functions, some equipment does both.

## **Things to consider:**

- Your individual needs.
- Your body (including your height and weight).
- Your toilet (some options may work better than others depending on your toilet).
- Cleaning the toilet and equipment: Some equipment is easier to clean than others.
- Who else will be using the toilet? Other members of the household, children, visitors.
- Is there an alternate toilet in the house for visitors or other members of the household?
- If other users and visitors to the house need to use your toilet, can you easily remove the toilet aid?
- Children and shorter people may have difficulty sitting on a raised seat.

It is important to consider your personal safety as well as your independence when issues arise with toilet access and transfers. If you have any concerns in this area, an Occupational Therapist may be able to assist.

# Height of the Seat

## Increasing the height

Increasing the height of the toilet seat can make it easier to get up and down from the toilet. There are many options that may help. Below are just some of the options available.

### Things to consider:

- It is easier to use your bowels when you have your feet supported when using the toilet and when your knees are positioned higher than your hips. Consider using a stool, a phone book or pack of toilet paper to put your feet on while using your bowels (be careful they do not become a tripping hazard).

**NOTE: If you have had a recent hip operation, do not position your knees higher than your hips.**

Check first with your surgeon or allied health professional regarding precautions and make sure your toilet height adheres to this.

## Over toilet frame

Over toilet frames fit over the top of the toilet. They have a raised seat and armrests. They are height adjustable.

Consider buying the splash guard as this helps direct mess into the toilet and prevents it going on the floor.

### Things to consider:

- You need to be able to push up evenly through both armrests to prevent the frame from tipping.
- There needs to be adequate space beside the toilet. The legs of the toilet frame need to be right back beside the cistern (this may be a problem if have side plumbing).
- You do not usually need to remove the existing toilet seat (just lift it up).
- If visitors use the toilet, the over toilet frame can be moved out of the way.
- Some over toilet frames do not have a lid for the seat.
- On most models you can add a bucket with lid. This converts it to a bedside commode that could be used by the bed at night.
- Folding versions are available for easier storage and travel.



## Toilet seat raiser

Toilet seat raisers are thick toilet seats that attach to the toilet bowl. They are available in different heights and with/without a lid.

### Things to consider:

- Toilet seat raisers don't fit all toilet bowls. Check they mount securely to your toilet.
- You may need to remove your existing toilet seat.
- They are more difficult to remove when other people use the toilet.



## Toilet seat spacer

A spacer is installed between the toilet pan and the toilet seat. They are usually secured to the toilet by replacing the toilet seat screws with extra-long metal screws. They are available in different heights.

### Things to consider:

- You can often use your existing toilet seat.
- Spacers are difficult to remove when other people use the toilet.
- Check they mount securely to your toilet.



## Higher toilet pan

There are higher toilet pans available.

### Things to consider:

- Need to replace the whole toilet pan. This may cost more than other options.

A higher toilet may make it difficult for shorter people or children



## Something to hold on to when using the toilet

### Toilet surround

Toilet surrounds are easy and quick to put into place.

#### Things to consider:

- You need to be able to push up evenly through both armrests to prevent tipping (unless it is secured to the floor using optional attachments).
- Need space around toilet.
- Models with non-folding armrests may not be suitable for people who side transfer from a wheelchair.

### Toilet mounted rails

Attach to the toilet bowl. They are usually secured to the toilet using the toilet seat screws. Some can be used with some seat raisers (or come as a combined unit).

Available with folding or non-folding armrests. Armrests can fold out of the way when wiping and adjusting clothing, and if user side transfers from a wheelchair.



#### Things to consider:

- Check the rails mount securely to your toilet.
- Toilet bowl needs to be in good order and able to take the forces applied.
- If your toilet seat has plastic screws, consider replacing them with metal screws.
- Non-folding models may not be suitable for people who side transfer from a wheelchair.



## Wall mounted grab rails

Grab rails are usually attached to a wall alongside the toilet. There are also grab rails that attach to the wall behind the toilet and/or to the floor.

Grab rails are available in different configurations to suit different situations.

Consider the positioning of the rail and how secure the rail is. An Occupational Therapist can recommend the optimal rail position for your individual needs.



### Things to consider:

- Grab rails are somewhat permanent (not portable).
- In rental properties, ask your landlord for permission before installation.
- Who will install the grab rail?



For more information about choosing and installing grab rails, refer to the ILCT 'Grab rails' information sheet.



# Additional Considerations

## Other things that may assist

### Bedside commode

Bedside commodes are useful to have by the bed at night. They are usually height adjustable.

Alternatively, you can add a bucket with lid to most models of over toilet frames. This converts it to a bedside commode that could be used by the bed at night.



### Mobile commode

Mobile commodes are a toilet frame on wheels. You can either push yourself or be pushed by someone else. They can also be used for showering where a stepless shower base is present.



### Hoists

Hoists lift you up in a sling. They may be useful for someone who needs significant assistance to move (e.g. from bed to mobile commode, or from wheelchair to commode or bath).

You need someone to operate the hoist; you cannot use them on your own. Hoists reduce the need for lifting and associated risk of strain or injury for carers.

There are many different hoist options available. If you need this type of assistance, contact ILCT or your Occupational Therapist.



### Home Modifications

Consider the way you get up and down from the toilet now and in the future.

Easy access to the toilet and bathroom is a key consideration in ensuring you can continue to manage in your own home.

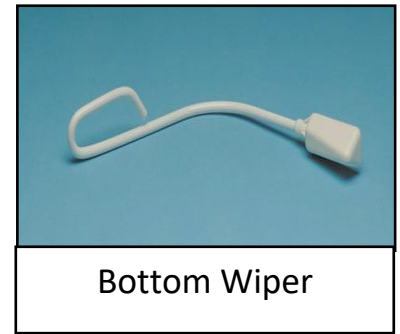
ILCT can provide ideas and suggestions for modifying your bathroom.



## Difficulty cleaning your bottom after toileting

Bottom wipers hold a length of toilet paper and have a handle that gives you more reach. Bidets can help you wash and dry your bottom after toileting.

For more information about options to make cleaning your bottom easier, see the ILCT 'Cleaning your bottom after toileting' information sheet (available on the ILCT website).



Bottom Wiper

## Public toilets

If you have difficulty using public toilets, consider using the accessible toilets. Most accessible toilets have grab rails, a higher toilet pan and more room to move.

To find out where public toilets are located, visit the National Public Toilet Map website at [www.toiletmapp.gov.au](http://www.toiletmapp.gov.au)



If you are building or modifying a bathroom for public use, you will need to refer to and comply with *Disability (Access to Premises – Buildings) Standards*.

## Travelling

Some equipment is more portable and may be suitable for travel. Other options include hiring equipment at your destination or staying in accommodation with suitable equipment already in place.

## Continence Advice

For advice about continence management, contact the Statewide Continence Service on 1300 723 143, or the National Continence Helpline on 1800 33 00 66.

# More information

For further information, or advice, about any item contained in this information sheet, please contact Independent Living Centre Tasmania Inc.(ILCT):

- Call 1300 452 827 to speak to a health professional.
- Visit our website [www.ilct.com.au](http://www.ilct.com.au) or email [info@ilct.com.au](mailto:info@ilct.com.au).
- ILCT visits communities around Tasmania. Contact ILCT to find out when we will be in your area.

ILCT provides Occupational Therapy, Physiotherapy, Speech Pathology, and Allied Health Assistant services, on a fee-for-service basis. Our team delivers comprehensive assessments and support that may include assistive technology, home modifications, communication aids, and other tailored interventions to enhance independence and quality of life.

ILCT specifically provides supports to those aged over 18, who are Tasmanian residents and are of any culturally-diverse background. ILCT are a registered provider under the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS).

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