



Getting On and Off the Toilet

Some people find it challenging getting on and off a toilet. Here are some options that may help manage your risk of falls.



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Launceston, Hobart, Ulverstone

Increasing the height

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 onto the floor.



Things to consider:

- You need to be able to push evenly through both armrests to prevent it from tipping.
- There needs to be adequate space beside the toilet. The legs of the OTF 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 OTF can be moved out of the way.
- Most OTF do not have a lid for the seat.
- On most models, you can add a bucket with lid. This converts an OTF to a bedside commode that could be used by the bed at night.
- Folding versions are available for easier storage and travel.

Things to consider:

- Toilet seat raisers do not fit all toilet bowls. Check that they can be mounted securely to your toilet.
- You may need to remove your existing toilet seat
- Most raised toilet seats do not have a lid.
- They are more difficult to remove when other people use the toilet.

Toilet seat raiser

Toilet seat raisers are thick toilet seats that attach to the toilet bowl. They are available in different heights.



Toilet seat spacer

A spacer is installed between the toilet pan and the toilet seat. A spacer is usually secured to the toilet by replacing the toilet seat screws with extra long metal screws. Spacers 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 that they can be mounted securely to your toilet.

Toilet spacer under the toilet pan

Toilet plinths are installed under the toilet pan to raise the whole toilet.

Things to consider:

- Need to replace the whole toilet pan. This may cost more than other options.
- A higher toilet may be difficult for shorter people or children to use.



Higher toilet pan

There are higher toilet pans available.

Things to consider:

- This may avoid needing to buy a whole new toilet pan. Speak to a plumber about plumbing requirements.
- A higher toilet may be difficult for shorter people or children to use.

Something to hold on to

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

Things to consider:

- Grab rails are usually permanent fixtures (not portable).
- In rental properties, ask your landlord before installing grab rails.
- Who will install the grab rail?
- The positioning of the rail and how secure the rail is.



Toilet surrounds

Toilet surrounds are easy and quick to put into place.



Things to consider:

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

Things to consider:

- Check that the rails can be mounted securely onto your toilet.
- Toilet bowl needs to be in a 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.

Toilet mounted rails

Toilet mounted rails are attached to the toilet bowl and usually secured using toilet seat screws. Some can be used with seat raisers (or come as a combined unit). Toilet mounted rails are available with folding or non-folding armrests. Armrests can fold out of the way when the user is wiping and adjusting clothing and if they side transfer from a wheelchair.



Things to consider:

- Your needs
- Your body (including your height and weight)
- Your toilet - some options may work better than others with your toilet
- Cleaning the toilet and equipment – some equipment is easier to clean than others
- Other people using the toilet – other member of the household, children, visitors, etc.
 - Alternate toilets in the home for visitors or other members of the household
 - Ease of removing toilet aids for other users in the home
 - Children and shorter people may have difficult sitting on a raised toilet seat

It is important to consider your personal safety as well as your independence when issues arise with toilet access and transfers.

Other things that may assist

Bedside commode

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

You can add a bucket with a lid to most models of over toilet frames. This converts an over toilet frame to a bedside commode that could be used by the bed at night.



Mobile commode

Mobile commodes are an over the 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 cannot put weight through their legs, who cannot walk safely or 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 a hoist; you cannot use them on your own. Hoists reduce the need for lifting and associated risk of strain or injury for carers.



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 that you can continue to manage in your own home.

Helpful tips

Using 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.

In new and existing public buildings undergoing significant upgrades, bathrooms for public use need to comply with Disability (Access to Premises – Buildings) Standards 2010 which require that accessible toilets meet required specifications.

To find out where public toilets are located, check out the national Public Toilet Map at www.toiletmap.gov.au. The toilet Map is also available on most mobile phones with internet access.

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.

Using your bowels

It is easier to use your bowels when you have your feet supported and your knees positioned higher than your hips when sitting on a toilet. 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!

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 complies with these precautions.

More Information

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

For advice about assistive technology and equipment, contact ILCT.

- **Ring 1300 885 886 to speak to a health professional.**
- **Visit our website www.ilct.com.au or email ilc@ilct.com.au.**
- **Make an appointment to visit one of the displays centers: Launceston, Hobart, or Ulverstone.**
- **ILCT visits communities around Tasmania. Contact us to find out when we will be in your area.**



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