

Getting Out of the House

Van

I couldn't afford the vans the hospital showed me so we started looking elsewhere. We shopped through the newspaper and internet for a van that would fit my 60" height in the chair. We finally found a used Ford Custom Classic E-150 with the raised roof and had it modified. They installed a lift, removed a seat, added tie-downs and raised the entry to the side doors. It was less than half (\$20k) of the new vans we were shown at the hospital.

Quick Chest Belt



I designed a chest belt that is easier to put on, the loops hang from the handles of my wheelchair. We cut an old seat belt just long enough to sew a loop on both ends and reach from a left handle of my chair around my chest to the right handle. If you don't have access to a sewing machine be sure to cut the belt long enough to tie a loop in either end. The belt can be put on much faster inside or outside the Van. We have found it a lot easier than navigating a fixed three-point belt around the chair to the buckle on the floor.



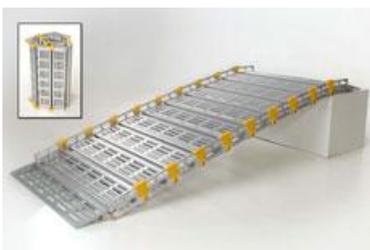
I didn't actually pay anything for this item because we used an old seat belt but I'm sure you can find webbed belting for a couple of bucks a foot. I enjoy the ease and convenience but cannot attest to its safety in a car accident.

Van Camera

The Van I purchased requires me to ride in the back and at my height it doesn't allow me to see the street. I purchase an inexpensive closed circuit camera. The camera is mounted on the rearview mirror and faces forward and wired to a TV. This allows me to see the street ahead.

Aluminum Folding Ramp

I keep two of these in my van for those opportunities to visit someone at their house. I have the 3' model (\$150) & a 6' model (\$350). They will get me in most front doors.



I found an alternative to the folding ramp's but I haven't quite justified the expense. I probably would have bought a **Rolla Ramp** (www.rollaramp.com) in the 9 foot length. When I talked with them, they told me that you can take them apart to use as shorter lengths.

(3' \$290 16 lbs) (6' \$540 31 lbs) (9' \$789 47 lbs)

Bed Risers

When I'm traveling I'm sure to carry a set of Plastic Bed Risers. They help to raise the bed to a level that allows a wheel lift system clearance and can help relieve back strain on your caregivers. They can be purchased at Wal-Mart or Target to \$10 or \$15.

Check out www.MakeaSplashInc.com for other ideas.



Make a Splash! Inc will work with the newly injured and their families on the transition to life in a wheelchair. In addition we will introduce life with a disability to able-bodied audiences and express the importance of making good choices in their daily lives.