



How to push a wheelchair – The user's perspective

Good practice guide for when you push an individual (ME) in a wheelchair;

- Ask **ME** before you start to push.
- Understand that the wheelchair is an extension of **MY** body.
- I am still in control even though you are pushing.
- Aim for a smooth ride, no sudden stops, starts or turns.
- Do not lean on **MY** chair.
- Look where you are pushing **ME** please avoid, chewing gum, glass, dog poo and other nasty hazards!
- Beware of other pavement users.
- No texting or answering your phone when you are pushing **ME**.
- Bumps can be painful – **WARN ME**, then avoid them, steer round them or go more slowly. Watch out for raised or uneven paving slabs too.
- Steer away from cobblestones, uneven floors etc as the vibrations can be very painful.
- Avoid recently laid tarmac that's still soft.
- Avoid puddles.
- Ice is BAD, snow is slippery.
- Never ever let go of **ME** without telling **ME**.
- If I am in a group of people, ask **ME** where I want to be. I might want to be at the end or in the middle.
- Don't speak for **ME**.
- Having a conversation with **ME** while you are pushing can be very uncomfortable for **ME**. When you are behind **ME** I need to twist and look up to see you. Lets decide together how best to achieve this. If I like you I might want you to come to my level but please respect **MY** personal space.
- When we stop, consider where you will leave **ME** and what I am looking at. Make sure **MY** brakes are on and check that I am happy.
- Remember respect is a two-way street.

Adapted from "The safe handling of a manual wheelchair" National Back Exchange 2014 with the kind support of Oliver Johnson.