WALKERS AND ACCESSORIES

WALKERS

Walkers have their own sequenced motions. The person 1) lifts or rolls the walker forward, but avoids bending forward, then 2) moves the weaker extremity forward, followed by 3) moving the stronger leg, and then 4) moving the walker forward again. Two concerns with walker use are that the person should not move the walker further than one step or walk into the cage of the walker as both will affect balance. To make turns with a walker, the person should move her feet in small incremental steps followed by lifting the walker in increments. In turning, the person should avoid twisting the trunk or moving the walker first. To reach for items from a drawer, closet, or table, it is best to hold the center top crossbar of the walker with one hand and reach with the other. This will prevent tipping. Leaning the walker against a counter or wall will also prevent tipping. Walkers, like canes, have varied features. Walkers have adjustable heights and cushioned rubberized hand grips. Some can fold for easier storage. Placing tennis balls on the back two legs will eliminate some of the noise. Walkers are best adjusted to the wrist level of the person.

FRONT-WHEELED WALKERS

Front-wheeled walkers (FWWs) have small wheels on the front legs and rubber-tipped back legs. Small skis or mushroom-shaped glides on the back legs will allow for more sliding and less lifting, especially for going over carpet or rough surfaces. A few rolling walkers come equipped with brakes so going down inclines or ramps is more controlled, but the person has to be coordinated and cognitively alert to use them. FWWs are recommended for those who have few cognitive deficits, are alert, are aware of their environment, and would benefit from using less energy for lifting.

WALKER BAGS

To help with carrying items when using a walker, a tray that fits toward the front and folds down or a basket that fits on the front crossbar may be easily attached. Some of these have cut outs for inserting a coffee cup. Quilted, vinyl, or cloth bags are like saddlebags that fit over the front or side crossbars of the walker and generally have several small and large pockets for carrying glasses, books, and personal items.

OUTDOOR WALKERS

These are more heavy duty in construction with larger wheels on all four legs that give traction in sand, snow, and uneven surfaces. These most often come equipped with a seat in the front or one that folds up, and a larger front basket that