

# Selecting a Scooter & Scooter Safety



If you can walk around your home environment, but have difficulty with walking longer distances, you may find a scooter useful. With so many options now available, choosing the right scooter can be quite challenging. The following tips may help.



## Factors to Consider

- Vision, hearing and coordination
- Environment in which the scooter will be used
- Transport needs
- Cost

# Considerations:

---

## Three or Four Wheels?

Will the scooter cope with the environments I want to use it in? Will I be using it on uneven surfaces, small spaces or hilly areas?

Does the scooter give me suitable leg room?

- Four wheeled scooters may be more stable on uneven terrain (but have a wider turning radius)
- Three wheeled are more manoeuvrable in confined spaces, and may have additional leg room via an extended foot platform each side of the front wheel.

## Seat

Can I adjust the seat to suit me? Can the lever be placed on my preferred side? Is it easy for me to operate?

- Most seats will be contoured and padded.
- Some have height, forward and backward adjustment.
- Will usually swivel 180 or 360 degrees to aid in transfers and also to allow you to remain in your scooter whilst at a table.
- Armrests fold up to assist in transfers.

## Frame

What if I need to transport my scooter?

Can I adjust the tiller to suit me?

- Some scooters can be taken apart, but the pieces are quite heavy.
- Before purchasing consider the weight of parts, the size of your car boot and equipment such as a lifter, trailer, carrier or ramp that may be required.
- The tiller is the front steering column that provides speed controls and can be adjusted for comfort and fit.

## Ignition

Will my scooter be secure? Will I be able to operate the ignition?

Scooters have either a standard key or a jack plug. Once removed, the scooter cannot be driven. If you need to push the scooter, use the free-wheeling lever to disengage the brakes.

## Controls

Does the scooter come with the type of control I need? Is it finger or thumb operated? Can it be operated with one hand?

A lever operated by either your fingertips or thumbs will usually control the scooter's acceleration. This can be a single lever for forward and backwards (allowing operation with one hand), or a lever on both the right and left.

A speed dial or touch button control allows the scooter speed to be altered to suit the environment and your skill level.

## Safety Features

Will my scooter be seen by other pedestrians?

Most scooters have indicators, a headlight and horn. Some can have anti-tip wheels, low battery light, automatic speed reduction in reverse, reverse beeper and self-checking electronics.

## Options and Accessories

Can it carry my medical equipment?

Can I make it more comfortable?

Options include a seat lever located on a preferred side, long range batteries, high backed seat, and electric seat rise.

Accessories such as canopy covers, rear view mirrors, oxygen carriers, shopping baskets, walking frame and stick holders, and safety flags are also available.

# Scooter Safety

---

You will need good eyesight, hearing, strength and balance to safely manoeuvre a scooter, as well as the ability to problem solve and make quick decisions. If you are unsure, see a GP or Occupational Therapist for advice.

## Scooter Safety Tips:

---

### Plan ahead

Avoid busy areas and traffic times if you can.

### Choose the right speed

Scooters are allowed to travel up to 10 km per hour but this does not mean it is always the best speed for the environment.

### Getting Around

Travel up and down ramps/inclines as straight as possible (not at an angle). Slow down when turning corners to stop your scooter from tipping. Keep your feet on the footpads.

### Use a safety flag

Alert other vehicles to your scooter's presence.

### Keys

Always make sure the key is turned off and removed before getting on or off your scooter. If the controls are accidentally knocked, the scooter will not move.

### Always check tyre pressures

If your tyres are under-inflated, this can affect your scooter's stability and efficiency. The recommended pressure should be marked on the scooter tyres.

### Seat

Before driving, make sure your seat is in the locked position. Lower seats provide better stability.

### Weight

Try not to carry excessive loads in your basket as this affects steering and can cause your scooter to overbalance. Distribute weight evenly.

### Look and Listen

- Use a horn when necessary.
- Fit rear vision mirrors.
- Always watch the path in front and keep an eye out for uneven surfaces and obstructions.
- Be particularly careful over rough or congested areas.

### Get to know your scooter's capabilities

Be aware of stopping distances, especially on wet surfaces. Consider endurance and battery life – always plan ahead.

### Storage & Maintenance

Store your scooter undercover in a secure area.

Recharge the battery in a well-ventilated area when not in use (scooter batteries prefer to be overcharged rather than undercharged).

### Scooter Electronics

Avoid using your scooter in the rain as this may interfere with the electronics.

Keep food and drinks away from the control box and electrical fittings. If your scooter does become wet, wipe it dry as soon as possible.

# Frequently Asked Questions

---

## Do I need a licence to drive a scooter?

No. Scooter users are considered to be pedestrians and must not travel over 10km per hour. This means you also need to travel on the footpath when possible, give way to traffic and cross roads at traffic lights or pedestrian crossings.

## Can I use my scooter on public transport?

Some scooters can be used on buses, trains and taxis that have disability access.

### Important guidelines:

- The maximum space for transportation of a scooter on accessible taxis and various modes of public transport is 800mm x 1300mm.
- For safety reasons, to access public transport via a boarding ramp the combined weight of the scooter and user must not exceed 300kg.
- When travelling in a car or accessible taxi you must sit in an appropriate car seat with seat belt. Your scooter can be carried in the boot or cargo area.

## Can I take my scooter into shops or accessible toilets?

It is expected that scooter users will be able to walk short distances if required and can independently transfer on and off the scooter.

- Small shops may not have space for a scooter, so you may need to leave it outside.
- Accessible toilets are not designed for the size of a scooter. They are only accessible for wheelchairs.
- Lifts may not have adequate turning space, requiring scooters to reverse in/out.

## Can I drive my scooter at night time?

Lights should be fitted to use a scooter at night time, including:

- A white light at the front.
- A red light at the rear (red reflectors at the rear are also a good idea).
- Wearing bright or light coloured clothing will help improve your visibility.

## Does my scooter need to be insured?

No. This is not a legal requirement, provided the scooter is limited to a maximum speed of 10km per hour.

When buying a scooter, users are advised to notify their insurance company and clarify their insurance cover for loss, theft or damage both at home and when travelling in public.

---

## Further Information:

**ILC Head Office:** The Niche, Suite A, 11 Aberdare Road, Nedlands WA 6009

**Telephone:** 08 9381 0600 or 1300 885 886 **Fax:** 08 9381 0611

**Email:** [general@ilc.com.au](mailto:general@ilc.com.au) **[www.ilc.com.au](http://www.ilc.com.au)**