

TEACHING MANUAL WHEELCHAIR SKILLS

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Introduction

This workshop provides clinicians with the tools needed to teach wheelchair handling. Up to twenty specific skills will be covered subject to the availability of appropriate obstacles (e.g., curbs and steep inclines etc). Participants will have an opportunity to practice the skills and to teach others. Each skill will be described and the reasons for learning discussed. Ideal chair set up to facilitate learning will be described and teaching points explained.

Objectives

After completing the workshop, the participant will be able to:

- describe each skill and explain why it is valuable to the wheeler
- explain how configuration and set up impacts chair performance
- demonstrate how to provide stand by assistance (spotting) specific to each component of every skill
- create activities designed to facilitate mastery of a skill based on the wheelers abilities
- teach a fellow participant how to hold the balance position for a minimum of ten seconds

Description

This hands-on workshop will prepare the clinician to teach manual wheelchair skills. It covers the principles underlying the basic skill as well as strategies which make the skills easier or more challenging. The actual skills taught will depend on the terrain, obstacles and equipment available at the conference site.

The guidelines applied in this workshop are based on the following premises:-

- Potential should not be restricted or predefined by the clinician abilities or choices
- Clinicians do not need to demonstrate the skills being taught
- Wheelers need to be challenged
- Wheelers need to succeed
- Wheelers need variety
- Wheelers need to develop a problem-solving attitude
- Understanding enhances skill development
- The ultimate objective is to complete a task with the least expenditure of energy
- Any task which challenges the wheeler's comfort envelope in their wheelchair has the potential to pay dividends down the road when they are confronted with an unexpected situation.

A comprehensive illustrated guide is available on line at: <http://www.assistive-technology.ca/docs/mwskillsg.pdf>

References

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Speaker Bio:

Ian Denison has worked as a physiotherapist and equipment specialist at GF Strong since 1980. He is a regular presenter at conferences in the US and Canada on various aspects of mobility. He has received awards for his work on understanding and enhancing mobility from OT, PT and Seating & Mobility Associations. Including the Mundy Award in 2004 and the Vancouver Coastal Health Healthcare Hero Award in 2015.