

Can't walk? Try scooting!

December 2014 and I'm heartily sick of the pain in my foot arch and the bunions and the crooked toes and not being in comfortable, smart fashionable shoes!

A helpful friend said "Go and talk to "Mary Jane" (a lady who lives in the Valley). She had an operation on hers and it was a great success". So, a cuppa and a chat, plus a trial ride on a four-wheeled scooter, and the decision was made.

For the first six weeks my leg was in a light but firm plaster which came from the tip of the toes to below the knee and this would have been very restricting unless I had hired the Ambulate Kneewalker - freedom achieved! Obviously I couldn't drive a vehicle but, having the good leg to push with, I could scoot anywhere wide enough to accommodate the Kneewalker.

At only 81cm (32") from front wheel to back wheel and 52cm (20½") wide from side to side of the handlebar, there was no problem with bedroom/bathroom door sizes, and public access to anywhere was a breeze. The steering column and handle bars fold down for putting in the back seat or boot of a vehicle, and there is a light wire basket which attaches to the front of the handlebar if you wish to use it. Obviously stairs are out, but there are alternatives in most places and I found that low steps, e.g. from garage into the hallway - only about 3", were manageable. The seat where one kneels is shaped and padded to ensure it is comfortable for a reasonable length of time. The height from the floor can be adjusted, and my only suggestion would be that one needs good, soft but firm padding between the plaster and the leg; otherwise the plaster may aggravate the leg skin.

Logan would collect a trolley at the front of the grocery store and head off down one aisle while I whizzed off with my basket and a store basket wedged between the steering wheel column and my knee, and we would both meet at the checkout in no time at all. Because we have tiled floors in all but bedrooms, getting about in the house was a breeze. Carpet obviously needs a bit more leg strength, but is still easy. Concrete is easy to get around on but gravel, grass and other soft bases are either very tiring or out of the question.

I was lent a Care Quip shower stool which was great, with a slightly frontwards sloping seat, adjustable height and 20" wide seat taking 125kg (I didn't need to worry about weight too much). The other item which made toileting easy was a height adjustable commode. From K Care in Perth it was another welcome aid. To those people who lent me these aids, big thanks.

Physiotherapy is a must as you progress with regular exercise and rest in between.

Best wishes.

Elaine Apperley

Elaine kindly shared her personal experience of the Ambulate Kneewalker at the request of the Kangaroo Valley Seniors Accommodation and Support Committee. For further information, see www.ambulate.com.au.