

# How to choose a mobility scooter



***Mobility scooters are known by a variety of names including electric scooters and gophers. They are an increasingly popular method of transport for those with limited mobility due to injury or age and who wish to remain independent in their local community.***

Compared to a car they are very economical to run, easy to manage and safe so when someone no longer feels comfortable driving a car they are a great option for getting out and about and keeping your independence. No licence or registration is currently needed in NSW, however we recommend you discuss with your doctor or health professional your ability to manage a mobility scooter before any purchase. Under Australian Roads Rules, mobility scooters are classed as a motorised pedestrian with a maximum allowable top speed of 10km/hr.

When deciding to purchase a mobility scooter there are many factors to consider to ensure the best choice for your needs. At Vital Living we have over 20 years experience in providing quality advice to customers when selecting a scooter. We strongly recommend trialling any scooter in your home environment before purchase to ensure the optimal scooter for your needs is purchased. Contact one of our staff for an obligation free demonstration.

## **3 or 4 wheel scooter**

3-wheel scooters offer more legroom than 4-wheelers. They are ideal for tall users where there are difficulties bending the knees for extended periods. They are more maneuverable due to their tighter turning circle making them better suited to tight conditions. Despite being considered unstable by some, when correctly driven in the recommended conditions they are safe and stable to use.

4-wheel scooters are more stable and better suited to uneven surfaces and terrain. Some models have a longer wheelbase and lower wheel arches to provide legroom for taller users. Many users feel safer on the 4-wheel models and that confidence is important to independent and regular use.

## **What size scooter is correct for me?**

Small mobility scooters are ideal for those wishing to transport their scooter regularly. They are generally easy to dismantle or fold into a vehicle, the parts are relatively light and they assemble easily. With relatively smooth tyres and low ground clearance they are designed for use on smooth flat surfaces like shopping centres or well maintained footpaths. They are generally not suitable for tall users over 180cm or users over 110kg. Top speeds are usually below 8kph and manufacturers travel distances are between 15km and 30km per charge.

Medium sized scooters are the most popular for general outdoor and limited indoor driving. They usually have either 10" or 11" tyres, comfortable adjustable seating and many have lights and limited suspension. Top speeds vary up to 10km/hr and ranges are between 25km and 35kms.

Large size scooters are suitable for taller and heavier users, or where there is the need for regular long distance driving on steep hills and uneven terrain. They generally offer deluxe seats, soft riding suspension, extended legroom, more power and bigger batteries. Ranges vary from 40km to 50km.



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## **General considerations**

**Battery size:** The battery size of a mobility scooter is similar to the size of a petrol tank on a car. It determines the distance the scooter will go. At Vital Living we only use quality gel batteries, ensuring the longest possible lifespan and most economical running cost.

**Range:** Careful consideration regarding the distance you wish to travel is a major consideration. Manufacturers quoted ranges are measured under ideal circumstances which rarely occur in real life. Speak to one of our consultants to ensure the scooter/battery combination you are considering is sufficient for your needs.

**Terrain:** Are there hills in your area and does the scooter you are considering have the power and range to handle these hills and the type of terrain you will need to traverse.

**Your height and weight:** Is the weight capacity suitable for yourself and any shopping you may wish to carry? Is there enough legroom on the scooter? If you have a petite frame do you need a large size scooter?

**Suspension:** Carefully consider any uneven surfaces you may drive over and your needs for a smooth ride with suspension.

**Will you need to transport the Mobility Scooter?** What vehicle will it be transported in? Can you or your carer pull the scooter apart, place it in the car and reassemble it? Will you need a ramp to load it?

**Medical conditions:** Do you have any existing medical conditions that would make the scooter difficult for you to drive such as arthritis or any medications that may make it unsafe to drive?

**Turning Circle:** Does the scooter have the turning circle, width and length to enable you to access all areas you require?

**Storage:** All mobility scooters should be charged everyday after use. Therefore a safe dry area for storage and charging is essential.

**Servicing and spare parts:** At Vital Living we only sell mobility scooters from reputable suppliers who commit to carrying spare parts. Unfortunately not all wholesalers have the same standards. Our technicians are fully trained and certified by the suppliers and will either come to your home or service your scooter in their workshop.



## **Port Macquarie Showroom**

2/187 Lake Road Port Macquarie  
p 02 6581 2400 f 02 6581 2422  
e mail@vital.net.au

## **Forster Showroom**

2/6 Enterprise Court Forster  
p 02 6554 9444 f 02 6554 9777  
e forster@vital.net.au

