

Introduction

Most people get into a car by stooping to move sideways through the door. They put in one leg, sit down, and then bring in the other leg. However, if you have problems with mobility or balance, getting into a car this way might be difficult or unsafe. It's easier and safer to sit down in the car first, and then move your legs into the car after you're seated. If the ground is slick or icy, this method is safer for everyone.

Try this:

1. When you get to the door, turn around so that you're facing away from the car. Reach back to hold on to something stable, such as the seat or the door frame.
2. Sit down so that you are sitting sideways on the seat. Be careful not to hit your head on the top of the door jamb.
3. Slide around so that you're facing front and lift your first leg in, and then follow with the second leg.

To get out of the car, do the same steps in reverse order:

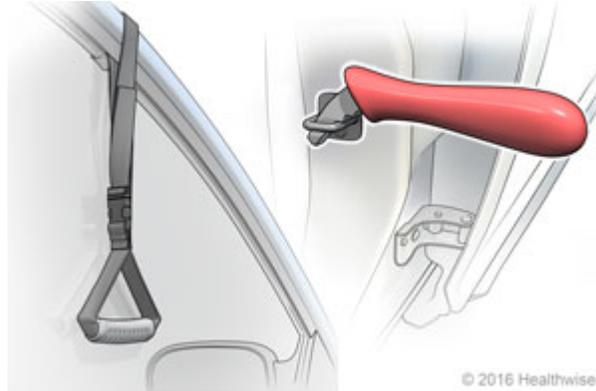
1. When the door is open, lift your first leg out the door and put your foot on the ground.
2. As you do the same with your second leg, slide around so you are facing out the door.
3. Use the seat or door frame for support as you lean forward and push yourself up to a standing position.

If your car seat has fabric upholstery, you might find that it's hard to slide around. Try covering the seat with something to make it easier to slide on, like a piece of plastic or vinyl. Make sure it doesn't get in the way of your seat belt.

If you still have trouble, ask your physiotherapist or occupational therapist to show you the best way to get in and out of a car. He or she can also tell you about tools that can make this easier for you.

What tools can help you get in and out of a car safely?

Grab bar and door strap



1. There are several types of hand-holds that you can install on the frame of your car door or beside the door.
2. They can give you something to hold on to as you get in and out of the car seat.

Swivel seat



1. A swivel seat is like a lazy Susan or a turntable. You sit down facing sideways and then use it to turn forward as you pull your legs in.

Seat belt extender



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1. You may have a hard time dealing with a normal seat belt. An extension may help you find and reach the end of the belt more easily.

Follow-up care is a key part of your treatment and safety. Be sure to make and go to all appointments, and call your doctor or nurse call line if you are having problems. It's also a good idea to know your test results and keep a list of the medicines you take.

For 24/7 nurse advice and general health information, call Health Link at 811.

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