

Home Modifications Booklet V 2007

Bedroom, Lounge and Dining Rooms

Laundry

References

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Standards and government legislation are continually changing, as is the type of equipment available due to improvement in technology. Prices and contacts are current as at September 2007. Because costs change, prices are included as a guide only. Please use the contact numbers provided to obtain the most recent and up to date information.

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Acknowledgements

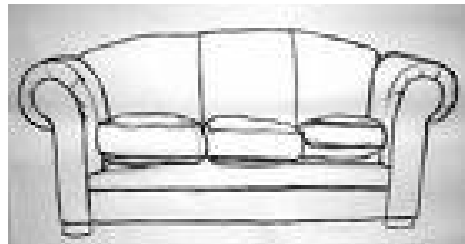
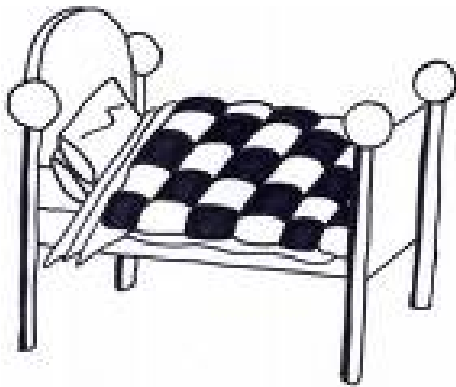
Originally devised by Mary Rydstrom

Linda Moylan and Belinda Harris, occupational therapy students from the University of Queensland completed this booklet in July 2004.

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Bedroom, Lounge and Dining Room



SBH and Montrose Access Home Modifications Booklet 2007

All products and suppliers described in this booklet are intended for illustrative purposes only. We recommend you seek professional advice prior to completing any modifications or purchasing any assistive devices. This information is current as of October 2007.

Bedroom

Bedrooms are a place where people can sleep, relax, feel comfortable and safe. A spacious room with adequate lighting and well-placed furniture is important. Bedrooms are ideal if they are in close proximity to a bathroom and make the most of natural lighting and ventilation.

Space

The ideal size of a bedroom really depends on the number of occupants, the level of disability and the furniture and fixtures planned to go into the room. For ease of transfer, 1000mm to 1200mm is the recommend space allowance next to the bed for a standing transfer (Hunter, 1992). If a person is unable to stand, 1400mm is recommended for a lateral transfer (Hunter, 1992). Consider from which side the person prefers to transfer to and remember to allow adequate room for a wheelchair to turn. The ideal circulation space for **most** wheelchairs in the bedroom is:

90 degree pivot turn.....	1550 x 1550mm to 1750 x 1750mm
180 degree pivot turn.....	1550 x 2100mm to 1750 x 2300mm
360 degree pivot turn.....	2250 diameter to 2450mm diameter

(Hunter, 1992)

Having the bedroom attached to an en-suite bathroom is ideal, so that it is easy to move between the bed, toilet and shower.

Bed and mattress

People spend approximately one third of their lives in bed so it is very important to select the correct bed to ensure your health and well-being. Allowing at least 1200mm clearance at the side of the bed should allow enough room for bed making.

It is often easier to transfer between the bed and a wheelchair if the bed is a little higher than standard. If necessary, the bed can be raised without expense by placing bricks or phone books under the legs. Alternatively, organisations such as TADQ (refer to section two) can custom build bed raisers for the cost of materials only.

Beds

There are many different types of beds available for purchase such as non-adjustable, manually operated and electrically adjustable beds. Some beds can be very expensive and one alternative may be to hire a bed or any additional equipment required. With any bed, safe access and operation of the bed must be taken into account.

Some people require more assistance than others, and an electric bed assists an individual to sit up, as well as raises the bed to allow carers to work at an appropriate height. Electric beds have a hand held control attached to an electric motor. The bed can be adjusted for height (referred to as Hi Lo), tilt, backrest angle, leg-rest height and a knee break (a knee break prevents an individual sliding forward and provides support for a person with contracted hips and knees). Some important factors to remember when selecting an electric bed are to ensure the bed has sufficient room underneath for a hoist and for the controls to be easily operated and accessed by people with weak hands. It is also important to consider the amount of room needed to turn over without the threat of falling out, and some people may prefer to have a double bed or king single. A larger bed is also preferable to using bed-rails to prevent falls.

Bed Transfer Equipment

Some people may experience difficulty getting in and out of bed, or repositioning themselves in bed. The following are a variety of devices that can assist individuals to transfer or reposition independently, as well as aids to assist carers to reposition an individual in bed.

Bed equipment

- A **Bed Ladder** attaches to the foot of the bed and allows the user to pull up from a lying position by pulling up on each rung on the ladder.
- A **bed stick** provides an anchor point for people to grasp to assist them to turn in bed. These devices are placed between the mattress and the bed platform. Care must be taken to ensure that the device is properly fitted and secured.
- A **self help pole**, which is often known as a monkey pole, consists of a metal pole at the head of the bed with a chain and triangular handle which hangs above the user's head. These poles can be helpful when a person needs to lift themselves up from the surface of the bed. Some people find them difficult to use, as they require substantial upper body strength.

Mattresses

It is important to trial different mattresses for comfort and pressure care. Your occupational therapist will be able to help you with decisions regarding bedding and mattresses.

Please refer to the Life Tec Qld website for more information on beds and bed equipment at www.lifetec.org.au

Continence aids for bedding

Waterproof bedding and protectors are available. Disposable bed pads and mattress covers can be purchased as well as reusable aids made from polyester with water-resistant backing. These may enable a more comfortable nights sleep and reduce the time required to clean the bed linen. A **Kylie sheet** has two layers of fabric and allows moisture to pass through the top layer to a second absorbent layer while the top later remains dry. Available from: Medical and Surgical Requisites.

Wardrobe

Wardrobe designs to be considered for ease of access are built in wardrobes with sliding doors and walk-in or wheel-in where possible. If this is not possible, ensuring there is no lip will allow a person in a wheelchair to wheel-in as close as possible. The ideal height for rails to hang clothes on depends on the individual's height, mobility and if they use a wheelchair or not. As a general guide, to ensure accessibility from a wheelchair the following heights may be suitable:

- from a forward approach 360mm to 1120mm and
- from a side approach 230mm to 1350mm (AS1428.2, 1992)

Where possible, create open shelving for easy access. The preferred maximum height above the floor for shelves is 1250mm for a person in a wheelchair, however this may change due to individuals characteristics (Hunter, 1992). Where drawers already exist, ensure they slide easily and do not slide all the way out.

Lighting

Lighting is best if it is a combination of both natural light and artificial light. This will improve visibility for tasks such as reading in bed, working at a desk and searching for clothes in cupboards and the wardrobe. Task lights are recommended to increase illumination.

Floor coverings

Appropriate floor coverings include non-slip vinyl or tiles, timber floors or low pile carpet without an underlay. It is important that carpet is glued down well and loose rugs are removed as they provide a hazard for both ambulant people and wheelchair users. Please refer to the flooring section for more detailed information.

Mirrors

Mirrors may be mounted at a lower than standard height to suit an individual using a wheelchair. Alternatively, a full length freestanding mirror may be appropriate. These are available from department stores or furniture stores. A mirror placed on a dressing table and tilted slightly downwards may also be adequate.

Power points and light switches

Please refer to the power point and light switch section for information. A touch lamp beside the bed may be useful as an easily operated light source.

Communication Devices

It is ideal to place a telephone, as well as other communications such as an intercom, emergency call or remote controls next to the bed for easy access. They can be placed on the bedside table or mounted on the bed or wall next to the bed.

Appendix - Bedroom

Supplier

Medical and Surgical Requisites
3 Fulcrum St
Richlands QLD 4077
Phone number: (07) 3217 0966
Fax number: (07) 3375 1171
Website: <http://www.medsurg.com.au>

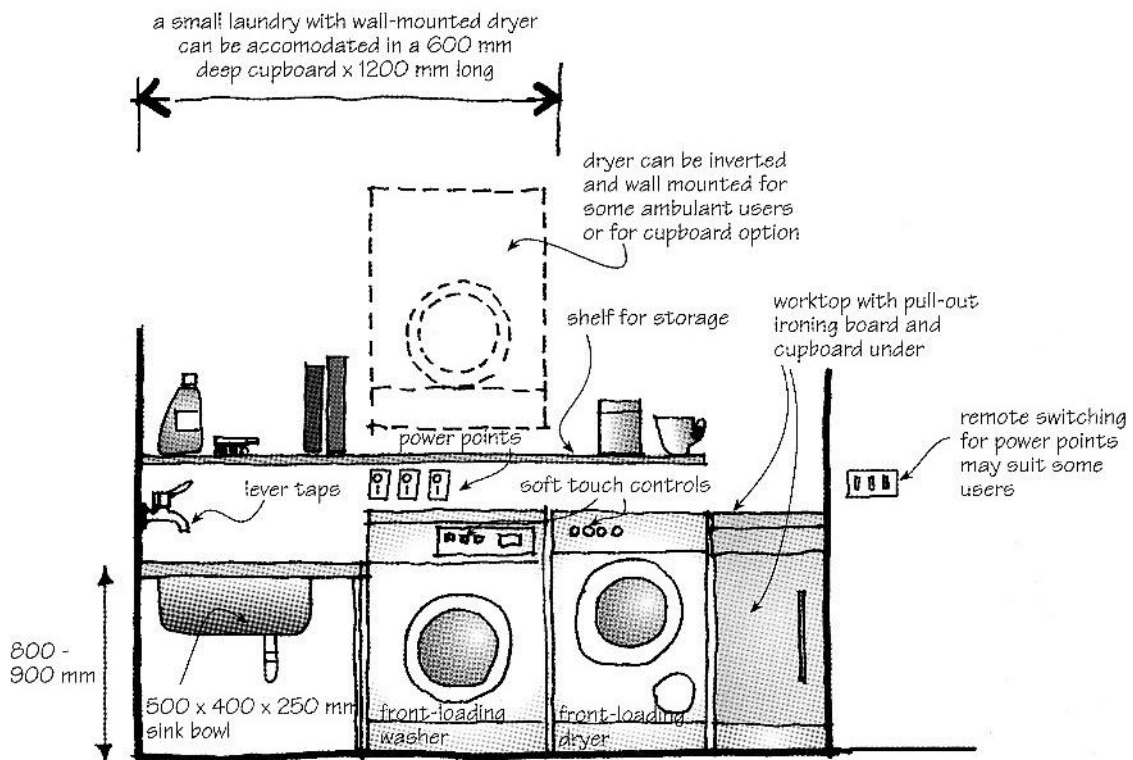
Lounge and Dining Areas

This area may be used as the family room or sitting room where the television is located. These rooms generally accommodate a high amount of traffic and it is important to consider whether the area is functional, accessible and comfortable. An open plan lounge dining area is most accessible as it allows additional space for circulation of the wheelchair.

The dining room table of approximately 760mm above floor level should be sufficient to allow adequate clearance for wheelchair arms. This height may need to be higher for power chairs. The height of tables can be cheaply adjusted where necessary by placing bricks or phone books under the legs of the table. Ensure the table maintains stability.

See flooring section for recommended floor coverings in the lounge / dining area.

Laundry



(Master Builders Association, 2001)

Laundry

Purpose

The laundry is typically a confined and tightly furnished area of the home where the washing machine, dryer, laundry tub, ironing board and storage units are located. This area is a workspace that requires consideration to wheelchair access for easy operation of washing equipment (Building Commission, 2002). This section presents ideas which could be incorporated into the designing of the laundry to enable a person with a particular disability to optimally access and use the laundry.

What to consider when modifying a laundry

Location and Layout

- The minimum amount of space that is required for wheelchair manoeuvring is at least 1500mm diameter.
- The laundry work surfaces and sink should be at an appropriate bench height with adequate knee space underneath to facilitate the use of all work surfaces and washing equipment.
- Wet washing is very heavy and bulky so design the laundry to minimise the need to move washing over large distances. For example, place the laundry trough next to the washing machine and place the drier next to or above the washing machine.
- If using an external clothesline, it is useful to have a doorway which gives direct access to the clothesline from the laundry. Ensure all paths to the clothesline are wheelchair accessible and wide enough to push a small wheeled laundry basket. See *pathways* section in external access for more information.

Washing machine

Front loading washing machines are preferred to top loading machines. Front loading machines use less water and less electricity than top loading machines; they also wash the clothes more gently than do top loading machines.

- Front loaders can be mounted at a convenient height. Clothes can be pulled straight from a front loading washing machine into a basket on the floor. If the machine is placed on a raised surface (i.e. plinth), ensure the machine can not fall off as it vibrates by installing a surface lip along the length of the bench top.
- Allow space on both sides of a front loading washing machine. On the side that the door opens for closer access and on the other side for space to open the door fully. It is easier to access a machine with a larger, wide opening door.
- A small top loading washing machine may be accessible if it has a small bowl. This may be an option if a front loading machine is not affordable.
- Taps should be positioned to the side of the machine for access.
- A machine with a fast spin cycle means drier clothes that are lighter to lift and hang out to dry. However, they may be more creased and require more ironing.
- When purchasing a new washing machine, seek information regarding the machine's ability to remove dirt, the water efficiency as well as the running costs and program time.

Clothes dryer

Clothes dryers are very convenient appliances to have at home and prove to be extremely useful in wet weather.

- Standard dryers are front loading with the controls located at the front. Many people prefer to use a clothes dryer rather than hang clothes out to dry on a clothesline.
- For effective use of space mount the clothes dryer on top of the front loading washing machine.
- Clothes dryers can be positioned upside down to improve the access to the control panel (Building Commission, 2002).
- Easy wide-opening doors with large handles and simple to use controls should all be considered when purchasing a dryer. Other factors to consider include the dryer's energy efficiency. Very few dryers are energy efficient and have energy star ratings above two stars.
- Dual washing machines and dryers can be purchased for instances where there is limited space or people have difficulty lifting heavy, wet clothes. However, these machines are a reasonably expensive option.

Clothesline

Outdoor clothes lines and hoists need to be either set at an appropriate height or be adjustable for accessibility. The recommended clothesline height is between 1100mm to 1600mm above ground level (AS4299), however this height is adjustable to meet the person who is not ambulant.

There are currently three styles of clotheslines available:

- Paralines/Paraline Duo
- Retractable lines eg. Extendaline (suitable for small spaces)
- Rotary clothesline

A concrete broom finished slab or alternative flat surface should be provided underneath a clothesline area for wheelchair accessibility (Disability Service Unit, 1994).

Laundry tub

- Laundry tubs are wall mounted and made of stainless steel. Most laundry troughs have a built-in cupboard underneath however this might need to be removed to allow for adequate knee space.
- Insulate the underneath surface to protect the lower limb from burns.

Taps

- Taps should be mounted at the side of the laundry tub rather than behind to provide easier access. Where this is not possible, a space 800mm in width between the tubs and the back wall may enable a person in a wheelchair to access the taps on the back wall.
- See kitchen and bathroom section for detailed information.

Ironing equipment

- Portable ironing boards are relatively cheap and are height adjustable. However, these boards are difficult to put up.
- Wall mounted ironing boards can be installed inside a cupboard or recess within a wall and are easy to use. Generally they are height adjustable and can be set between the heights of 600mm and 820mm. If it is not height adjustable, a likely height for ambulant users may be 800mm and wheelchair users 650mm (Hunter, 1992).

Appendix - Laundry

Suppliers

Washing Machine:

Most major appliance and department stores have a large range of washing machines. Check Choice Magazine.

Clothes dryer

Clothes dryers vary in price and are available from most major appliance and department stores. See White Pages for store locations.

Clothesline

Most hardware stores will have a large range of clotheslines. Some suppliers whose products have been accepted by the department of housing are:

- Hills Industries Limited 07 3212 9527
- Sunni Household Products 07 5592 2442
- Space Saver Clotheslines 07 5575 9224

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