Grabrail Information Guide

Information for patients, families and friends
What is a grabrail?

A grabrail is a rail a person can hold onto for support. You may need to use a grabrail to help you to move position (from sitting to standing) or move between places (moving through a doorway or stepping into a shower).

Grabrails come in many different sizes and shapes and need to be installed in a way that is safe for use. Your Occupational Therapist will work with you to identify grabrails that are right for you and your home.

How to use this information guide?

This guide provides information to help you to select and install grabrails in your home. The information in this guide must be used with the advice you received from your occupational therapist, doctor or other healthcare professional. Please speak to your Occupational Therapist before making any modifications.

In General; All Rails Should

- Be fixed firmly into a stud and be able to take the full weight of a person
- Have a non-slip grip if used in wet areas
- Be visible against the background especially if vision is compromised
- Provide a secure grip and preferably be circular in shape with diameter between 25-32mm
- Be installed with a clearance of 50mm between the rail and wall to avoid banging knuckles when gripping rail
Grabrail Placement

A grabrail can be installed in a number of locations around your home. The location of the grabrail will depend on a number of personal factors that you will discuss with your Occupational Therapist.

Toilet

Rails are ideally placed at your arm’s length and shoulder height when you are seated on the toilet. In some cases, you may need to have rails at both sides of the toilet for when you need to walk away.

**Diagonal rails:** These are useful if you need to move your grip upwards for support as you stand. A diagonal rail is also a good option if a stud cannot be located as it can run from stud to stud. The start of the rail should be right next to you at belly button height when you are sitting on the toilet (so this will be the lowest end). The far end of the rail should be at your arm’s length and at shoulder height when you are sitting on the toilet.

**L shaped rails:** This may be the most appropriate rail if you need to move your grip upwards for support when you stand or for support when you move from a wheelchair onto a toilet independently.
Shower or Shower-Over-Bath

Grabrails are useful when you need to step in and out of a shower (vertical rail) and for when you need to stand up and move around while in the shower (horizontal rail). If your Occupational Therapist has recommended you use other equipment in the shower, such as a shower stool or shower chair, this will be considered when deciding the best place to install your grabrail.

Horizontal rails: Generally placed on the same wall as the shower-head (rose) at the height of your belly button when you are standing. They provide support to steady yourself when you are standing up to shower.

Vertical rails: Generally placed at the entrance of the shower so you can hold onto it as you step in and out. They can also be helpful to have on the back wall of the shower for when you are turning around. Rails are of limited assistance in getting up off the bottom of the bath. This is a difficult movement and is generally not recommended if there is a safer alternative. If you do need to use the bath, an L shaped rail can provide support as you move in the bath from a seated position to standing.
Outside Rails on Steps
Rails installed outside rails on by steps or paths should be:

- At a height of 850mm – 950mm (around hip height)
- Parallel to the pitch line (or edge) of the steps
- 35-45mm diameter and provide continuous grip
- Extend 300mm beyond the top and bottom steps
- Made of galvanized pipe (will not rust in outdoor weather).

![Diagram of outside rails on steps](image)

Grabrails for over a Threshold Step
Grabrails for a step that is within a doorway should be:

- Fixed vertically into the door frame
- Not obstruct opening or shutting the door, or use of a key
- Be at shoulder height when standing outside facing the door

![Grabrail installed over a threshold step](image)
**Grabrail Installation**

The homeowner must provide approval for grabrail installation. If you are not the homeowner, you will need to get written approval from the homeowner before rails are installed. Grabrails may be installed by a family member, handy-man or builder. It is recommended that you consult with a builder to make sure the correct fittings are used for different wall surface and that rail manufacturer instructions are followed at all times.

Your Occupational Therapist will discuss the rail installation options with you to find out which option will best suit you.

**Information Available to Assist with Installation:** Bunnings has produced an instructional video titled “How to Install a Rail”. It is free to watch online at:


**Professional Assistance to Install a Rail:** Your Local Council may assist with grabrail installation. There may be a fee depending on your income. Speak with your Occupational Therapist for information or contact your Council directly. Alternatively, the SWEP program maintains a list of builders and tradespersons who will install rails. This list is available online at:


**Subsidised Home Modifications:** You may be eligible for a government subsidy to assist with your rail installation. This may require a referral from your hospital and you should speak with your occupational therapist for more information.
## Where to Buy Grabrails

### Melbourne

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Store Name</th>
<th>Address</th>
<th>Phone Number</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chadstone Bunnings</td>
<td>Homemaker Centre, 675-685 Warrigal Rd, Chadstone 3148</td>
<td>(03) 8567 1600</td>
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<tr>
<td>South Oakleigh Bunnings</td>
<td>1126 Centre Rd, South Oakleigh 3167</td>
<td>(03) 8542 5000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moorabbin Bunnings</td>
<td>Corner Fairchild Street &amp; Warrigal Road, Moorabbin 3189</td>
<td>(03) 8540 9500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peter's Mitre 10 (Caulfield)</td>
<td>95 Normanby Road, Caulfield 3162</td>
<td>(03) 9509 9811</td>
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<tr>
<td>Moorabbin Mitre 10</td>
<td>230 Wickham Road, Moorabbin 3189</td>
<td>(03) 9553 0155</td>
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<tr>
<td>Richmond Mitre 10</td>
<td>143 - 153 Palmer Street Richmond</td>
<td>(03) 94261700</td>
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<tr>
<td>Penhalluriack’s Building Supplies</td>
<td>345 Hawthorn Rd, Caulfield VIC 3162</td>
<td>(03) 95236000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thrifty-link Hardware</td>
<td>2/67 Inkerman St, St Kilda VIC 3182</td>
<td>(03) 95345454</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brighton Hardware (Thrifty-link Hardware)</td>
<td>621 Hampton St, Brighton VIC 3186</td>
<td>(03) 95922837</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reece Plumbing</td>
<td>865 Glen Huntly Rd, Caulfield 3162</td>
<td>(03) 95239127</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leef Independent Living Centre</td>
<td>652 Glenhuntly Rd, Caulfield 3162</td>
<td>1300 005 333</td>
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Contact Us

Your Occupational Therapist’s Name:
______________________________________________

Phone: ________________________________

Email: ________________________________

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