

Purpose

A bath bench is an assistive device that is helpful to ambulatory users that have difficulty stepping over the side of a tub safely. Bath benches provide stability while performing personal hygiene functions in the tub and will provide an increased level of safety and independence for the user. If you have not seen a therapist or physician in regards to your mobility limitations, we recommend that you do so.

Types

Bath benches come in two basic styles: with and without backs. The benches without backs are designed for individuals with normal sitting endurance and balance. Bath benches with backs are designed for individuals whose balance and strength are less than normal. The benches also come in models that fit inside the bathtub and models that straddle the tub (half in and half out of the tub). These models are referred to as transfer benches. Bath benches fit most brands of tubs but may not work with every brand. Make sure you read and understand all manufacturers' operating instructions.

All bath benches have a maximum weight limit that they can support. It is important to understand the limits and capacities of your bath bench:

Weight of user (stated by user) is _____ pounds.
Maximum weight capacity of bath bench is _____ pounds.

Use

To use a bath bench, place the bath bench in the appropriate position. Most tub floors are higher than the bathroom floor. Before using, ensure that the two legs inside the tub are adjusted to the same height and the two legs outside the tub are adjusted to the same height, so that a level seat height adjustment is achieved. When utilizing the bath bench the user should exercise care, discretion, and common sense. Always adjust your sitting position so that you sit down on the middle of the bath bench.

Safety

In order to ensure care and provide operator safety, make sure you follow these safety guidelines:

- Wipe up any water or slippery floor spills.
- Remove tripping hazards (loose floorboards, uneven floors, throw rugs, extension cords, clutter, etc.)
- Install grab bars, use bath mats with suction cups, and use raised toilet seats to prevent falls.
- Do not use a bath bench when taking any medications that may cause dizziness, drowsiness, and/or unsteadiness.

Safety (Continued)

The safe use of a bath bench requires it to be used as instructed, which includes the following safety precautions:

- Always check the security of the bath bench before each use, including the back support.
- Ensure that the legs are adjusted evenly and that all snap buttons protrude through the adjusting holes.
- Never leave a disoriented or physically challenged individual unattended.
- Do not use if wobbly or unstable.
- If the bath bench has arm supports, do not put your full weight on them. They are assistive devices only and are to be used while in the sitting position only. They are not to be used during transfers in or out of the tub.

Maintenance

Bath benches are water resistant, not waterproof. Never use a water spot remover on your bath bench; these solutions usually contain alkaline chemicals that can cause burning of the skin and are very difficult to remove. In addition, these products usually are very slippery when wet and can increase the likelihood of a fall. To keep the bath bench clean, use a non-abrasive detergent or cleanser with warm water. Make sure it is rinsed completely and is thoroughly dry before reusing. If you are using a bath bench with arm supports, make sure the handgrips are secure and not damaged. The handgrips are very important and you should inspect them regularly. The handgrips should also be checked for movement or slippage on a regular basis and replaced if damaged. Check the rubber tips on the legs for rips, tears, cracks or wear. If any of these conditions exist, replace rubber tips immediately.