



## Tips for Weighing Patients Using an Accessible Scale

10.4.10

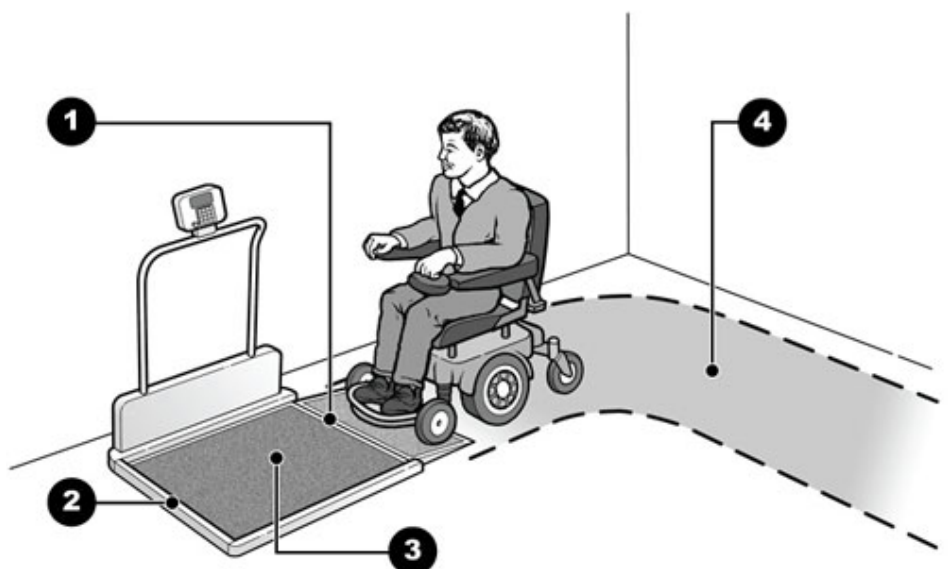
### Who should use an accessible weight scale?

#### Patients who...

- Have difficulty standing or maintaining balance on a standard scale platform.
- Have difficulty or are unable to step onto a standard scale.
- Weight is higher than the standard scale's limit.

#### How to weigh wheelchair users:

All wheelchair scales require 2x the (straight-route) length of the scale for a wheelchair or scooter user to enter and exit. The scale entrance route should not be blocked by obstructions, protruding objects, or fire exits. The route should also be away from high foot traffic areas and should not block frequently used room entrances.



1. Sloped surface provides access to scale platform -- no abrupt level changes at floor or platform.
2. Edge protection at drop off.
3. Large platform to accommodate various wheelchair sizes.
4. Provide maneuvering space to pull onto and off scale.

<sup>1</sup> *Access to Medical Care for Individuals with Mobility Disabilities*, U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division, May 2010

1. Remove excess weight from the wheelchair, such as book bags, backpacks, etc.

2. Have the patient roll their wheelchair onto the scale and lock the brakes for safety.
3. Weigh patient and wheelchair together.
4. Have the patient roll off the scale and then help the patient transfer to a safe location, e.g., chair, hospital bed or exam table.
  - a. Use lifting equipment and/or a one or two-person team, depending on need, to transfer the patient from their wheelchair to a safe location.
  - b. During transfer, carefully monitor the patient and provide for balance and support as needed.
  - c. If the safe location is in a separate room from the scale, do not leave the patient alone.
5. Roll the empty wheelchair back onto the scale and weigh. Then, document weight in the patient's chart for future use. (NOTE: There is no standard weight for a wheelchair)
6. Subtract the weight of the empty wheelchair from the combined weight of the patient and wheelchair to obtain the patient's weight.
7. Document the patient's weight in their chart.
8. After the exam, assist the patient in transferring back into their wheelchair.

*\*On every visit, ask the patient if they have the same wheelchair – that way you do not need to weigh it every time. However, you will still need to weigh the patient in their wheelchair at every visit, as you would for all patients.*

**Weighing patients with limited mobility and / or who have difficulty maintaining their balance on a standard scale:**

1. Place a chair (preferably an armchair) on the scale and document its weight.
2. Have the patient sit on the chair.
3. Weigh the patient and chair together.
4. Provide assistance to patient throughout weight measurement procedure. Carefully monitor the patient and watch for any balance support that may be Subtract the chair's weight from the combined weight of the chair and patient to get the patient's weight.

**Remember, anyone and everyone can use an accessible scale!**

**It is accessible to all your patients!**

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