

Accessories for Vehicles & Wheelchairs

“Moving from economy to first class ”



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A 2007 study of powered wheelchair users done by CATEA found on average, power wheelchair users spent almost 11 hours per day in their wheelchairs at home and around the community. Another study of manual wheelchairs published in the *Spinal Cord Journal* (2008) found that users spent an average of 9.2 hour (median 9.7, range 3.2–12.2 hour) per day in their own wheelchair. Compare this to the average time a person commutes to work as approximately 30 minutes and the longest non-stop commercial flight today from Singapore to Newark that lasts for 18 hours and 40 minutes. Most of us given an opportunity would not hesitate to fly first class in this case and make use of the luxuries. Similarly we equip our automobiles with XM radios, adjustable seats with built-in massage features, GPS systems and even cup holders and drink coolers. So one would think that there would be a similar list of accessories for adaptive vehicles and wheelchairs to make them more comfortable and convenient. Considering the time spent in them, one would expect a couple of magazines with articles about customizing wheelchairs like those that are available for computers and cars. Alas no such interesting publications exist...yet!!!



So in doing searches of products on the web and talking to personal friends I found a few products that are out there and perhaps this is just the beginning of what I hope is a tidal wave of others. Starting with something that has absolutely no functional purpose other than to look unique are wheelchair spinners. Many a paper napkin sketches have been created at the bars I haunt for something so incredibly simple, yet brilliant. Finally we have them from a company called ‘Beyond Independence’. A quote from Chris Lamoreaux, the owner and engineering graduate from Stanford says it all: “I have a special interest in design for wheelchairs and individuals with physical disabilities. So many items are designed only to let wheelchair users “survive,” and do not have any excitement or creativity associated with them. I want to change some of those designs and products so that they are great -- not merely functional. Do my spinners serve a serious functional purpose? NO! But that’s the point! They offer a means of giving wheelchairs a unique personality.”



www.beyondindependence.net/spinners.html.

Another way to add distinction to your chair is with casters that light up when they roll. They don't

require any battery power and are approximately \$25. A good justification to get them funded might be that you need them for safety reasons. Personally I would go for the cooler built in to the armrest.

Moving on to more practical solutions, I found a couple of battery chargers that can be used (a) to charge a wheelchair in a vehicle and (b) use the power source in a power chair to charge other products like cell phones and GPS systems.

- <http://www.powerstream.com/DC-input-chargers.htm>
- <http://www.atticventure.com>

By the way, it takes the space shuttle 8 minutes from launch to reach space. Imagine that less time than it takes to read this article. I am

Astrophysicist's chance to 'float' on air

Stephen Hawking will experience weightlessness in a modified jet that simulates zero gravity during 25-second intervals.

Zero gravity flight maneuver

An aircraft will fly a parabola, climbing for approximately 20 seconds at a 45-degree angle, subjecting the crew to almost twice the force of gravity.

Near the top, a feeling of zero gravity is achieved for approximately 25 seconds.

The plane then descends at a 45-degree angle. It'll fly 10 to 15 additional plunges for passengers.

Drawing is schematic.

SOURCE: NASA AP



sure there is a ton of technologies those bright engineers can come up with for the wheelchair industry. Well maybe it is too ambitious to get on board the space shuttle....then again maybe not. The great Stephen Hawking recently experienced eight rounds of weightlessness during a better-than-expected airplane flight that he saw as the first step toward a trip in space.

Staying closer to earth, Life Essentials is a company that manufactures accessibility modifications for agricultural equipment. Life essentials offers the Pilot Lift (a seat lift) and a platform lift for your tractor, combine, or other self-propelled equipment.

For the Harley lovers who want to get back on the open road, www.Christrikes.com is a Miami based company that manufacturers a kit for a motorbike. This unit has full limited-slip differential and independent suspension. The best thing for us is that the floor moves up and down. Yes, you roll in at three inches off the ground. Throw a switch, and you go up until you are sitting just above, and in back of the motorcycle's seat. You slide down and transfer on to the motorcycle and you are on the road again.

Finally the i-Pressure is a state of the art cushion sensor. It dynamically monitors air pressure and reports cushion inflation level (OVER/OK/UNDER). Its compact design as well as its simple interface give users and therapists the ideal tool for quick and effective air seating adjustment.

If you would like to see some new inventions in the beginning stages or have an idea you would like to implement visit www.disableddealer.com and click on top left banner "Rehab Ideas"

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