

CHECKLIST FOR BUYING AND FITTING GRAB RAILS IN YOUR HOME

Grab rails can give you additional support around your home. When positioned correctly, grab rails can help you by providing a firm grip and steady support when changing position for example

- ✓ when sitting down or standing up
- ✓ when walking on steps and stairs
- ✓ when getting into and out of a bath or shower

This leaflet provides some general information on buying and fitting grab rails. The type and positioning of a grab rail will depend upon your height, your weight, your grip and arm strength. The fitting of grab rails in your home will also depend on the material used in the construction of your home.

If in doubt, consult a professional tradesman who will be able to advise you on this.

Where to Buy:

You can buy many different types of grab rails from most hardware or builder provider stores. Some specialist pharmacies and healthcare supply stores also stock grab rails.

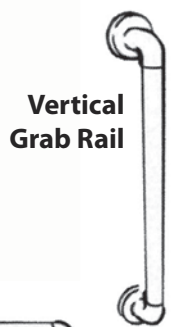
There are two things to consider when buying and fitting grab rails:

1. Type of rails

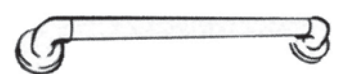
- ❑ There are many different shapes and sizes of rails available.
- ❑ Straight rails are most commonly used in bathrooms and indoor steps with sizes ranging from 300mm to 1200mm. A slip resistant finish on the rail should be considered for the shower or bath.
- ❑ Make sure to buy rails that will not rust. Regularly check grab rails for any signs of rust or loosening from the wall.
- ❑ Materials that retain heat should not be installed near sources of heat e.g. radiator.
- ❑ If you have problems with your vision, a contrasting colour between the surface wall and the grab rail may be useful.

2. Positioning your grab rail

- ❑ Solid, timber and plaster board walls will require different methods of installation. **If in doubt consult a professional tradesman to install the rail correctly for your own safety.**
- ❑ The ideal position when fitting grab rails in your home will depend on your unique needs, preferences, measurements and home environment.
- ❑ Grab rails need to be positioned within easy reach and provide plenty of support.
- ❑ Make sure your grip feels comfortable when holding the rail, avoid any twisting and turning of your wrist or your body when holding it.
- ❑ Horizontal grab rails assist in pushing up or lowering down for example, when getting up from a bath.
- ❑ Vertical grab rails assist with pulling up from a seated position, for example on/off the toilet.
- ❑ The size of the rail often depends on the space available.



Vertical Grab Rail



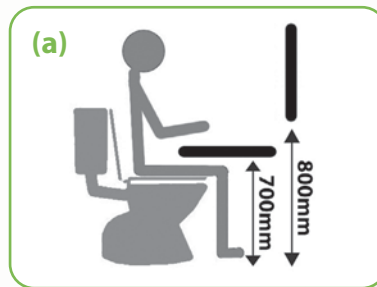
Horizontal Grab Rail

The measurements given below can be used as a general guide. The ideal location of the rails will depend on your individual size and reach.

Toilet:

Before fitting the rails, sit on the toilet to check you can reach the points where you plan to install them.

- (a) A horizontal grab rail placed at approx. 700mm from above floor level is a good height for most people when getting up from the toilet. A vertical grab rail, placed at approx. 800mm above the floor, can give you extra support when pulling up from a seated position.



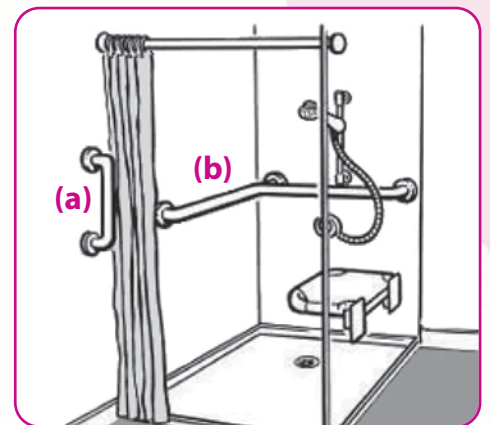
- (b) A drop down rail can be used where there is not a wall within easy reach of the toilet. Drop down rails are usually fitted at a height of 700mm.
- (c) If you find the position of the horizontal or vertical rail uncomfortable for your grip, the straight rail can also be placed diagonally. The placement of this rail will depend on your size and reach so check you are happy with the exact location prior to fitting.



Shower & Bath:

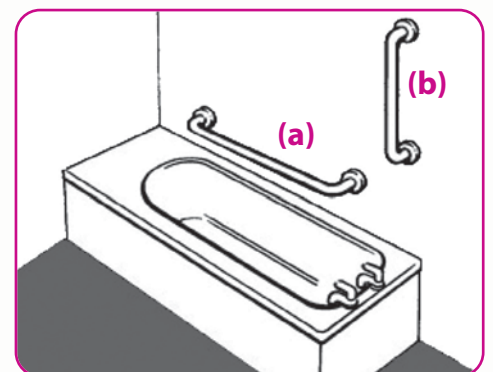
Shower

- Placement of grab rails in your shower will depend on whether you prefer to stand when showering or rather sit down on a shower seat.
 - When standing in the shower, a vertical grab rail, fitted at 800mm generally works well.
- (a) A vertical grab rail at the entrance into the shower at approximately 800mm above floor level can assist when stepping in and out of your shower.
- (b) A horizontal rail 700mm above floor level generally works well for a seated position to assist with standing up.



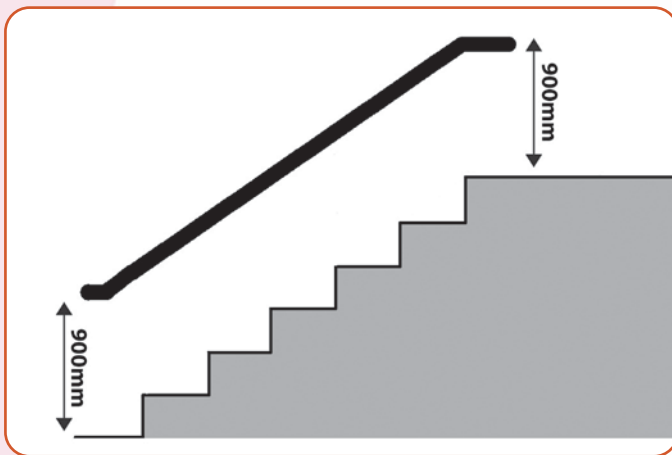
Bath

- (a) When standing from a sitting position in the bath you may find it helpful to hold one horizontal grab rail, placed centrally at a height 70mm above the rim of the bath. You can use your other hand to push up from the outer rim of the bath.
- (b) A vertical grab rail can be installed on the wall at the tap end of the bath. This is useful when stepping in and out of the bath and also to hold onto if standing to shower. This rail should be fitted at a height that is comfortable to reach when you are standing both from outside the bath and from in the bath.
- (c) If you find the position of the horizontal or vertical rail uncomfortable for your grip a rail can also be fitted diagonally. The placement of this rail depends on your size and reach so check you are happy with the exact location prior to fitting.



Stairs:

- A continuous handrail is recommended on the stairs. The rail should run from the bottom to the top of your flight of stairs.
- Allowed the handrail to continue past the top and bottom steps by 300mm.
- The handrail should be the same height as your existing banister.



Grab rails at the entrance to a property:

- A grab rail at your front or back door can help you going up and coming down a step.
- Check prior to fitting the rail that it does not block access to the door handle or lock.
- A standard straight metal or plastic grab rails can be used.
- The ideal height for the rail will depend on your height and reach, personal preference and the structure of the door frame or wall.
- As a general rule 600mm rail vertical rail may be positioned 790mm above the internal floor.

Further Resources:

The information given is for general guidance only. If you want further information on fitting and installing grab rails, the following publications can assist you.

- Disabled Living foundation www.dlf.org.uk. Useful fact sheets on installing and fitting rails.
- www.gov.ie/en/publication/78e67-technical-guidance-document-m-access-and-use/ Building Regulations Part M