

How Do You Make Pools Accessible?

Pool Lifts – Swimming pool lifts are mechanical devices that provide access to a pool. Pool lifts can be fixed or portable, battery-powered or pressure-powered, but they do give the most economical and easiest way to retrofit a pool for accessibility.



Sloped Entries – Sloped entries are similar to ramps that are used on dry land. They are expensive to install but virtually maintenance-free once they are in place.

Transfer Walls – Transfer walls, or low walls, allow a user to transfer from a wheelchair onto the top of the wall and then rotate and pivot into the water. You see transfer walls being used quite a bit with spas.



Accessible Stairs – Accessible stairs provide assisted pool entry for someone who is entering the pool from a standing position. These types of stairs have railings on both sides to provide support as the individual enters and exits the pool.

Transfer Systems – Transfer systems are a combination of a transfer wall and accessible stairs. A person transfers from a wheelchair to the top platform and then transfers either up or down the steps to get in and out of the pool. Obviously, transfer systems require strong transfer skills.

The size and type of pool determines how many means of access are required. For large swimming pools with an outside perimeter of 300 linear feet or more, 2 (two) means of access are required. One of those means of access must be either a swimming pool lift or sloped entry. These are considered primary means of access for swimming pools.

The other types of means of access can be any of the five. You can have two swimming pool lifts, a pool lift and a transfer wall, or a sloped entry and stairs - but you cannot have a transfer wall and stairs. You have to have at least one of either a pool lift or a sloped entry on a large pool.

For smaller pools (those under 300 linear feet of pool wall), one primary means of access is required and it must be either a swimming pool lift or a sloped entry. Spas and wading pools have different access requirements.

For more information, access the following links:

www.ada.gov

www.access-board.gov/ada-aba/final.cfm#a1009

www.theapsp.org