



These days, seniors with mobility challenges are on the move, visiting all the great places the big world has to offer. Airlines, hotel chains and many package group tours welcome wheelchair travelers, and adjust their services to make visits as comfortable as possible.

With advance planning, almost everything everywhere is accessible. Here are a few tips to make your journey smoother and easier.

First, visit your doctor to discuss plans and potential problems. Ask him/her to write out a report stating your physical situation, along with a list of current prescriptions and over-the-counter drugs. Travel with a SmartPhone with all necessary med and other data on it for instant display. Also, make at least two paper lists, one with your passport and other with luggage. Should you need medical assistance while in another country, any U.S. embassy or consulate will help find you local English-speaking doctors.

In case of delays, always take enough medication to last several days longer than your planned itinerary. Take as many meds in solid pill form as possible, rather than ointments, liquids or capsules.

Pack light and don't drag heavy luggage. Travel with simple clothes that can be washed daily as you wash and shower.

Your name, address, phone/Email and destination should be taped on just about everything. Have your wheelchair folded for stowing in the aircraft baggage compartment. Lock all moveable parts in place and put on the brakes. When the flight lands, check for damage and report any problems before leaving the terminal.

Expect the unexpected. Trains and planes arrive late, cabs get delayed in traffic and tour groups run behind schedule. Disabled travelers should pad extra time into their itineraries.

Once at your destination, schedule sightseeing itinerary with extra time, with only one or two attractions per day. Have a list of back-up visits if time allows. Access to tourist sites is constantly changing. If in doubt, call ahead to check on all facilities for the handicapped.

When arranging overnights, consider hotels/motels with convenient restaurants on the premises or close by. Although policies on tipping vary from country to country, always reward for extra assistance.

Travel can be both a challenge and an adventure, in wheelchair or not. For those seniors, having the courage to travel will can loosen the bonds of disability and open new worlds.