

For those with limited forward reach, remote controlled lever taps can be fitted to the front fascia of the sink worktop. Reduced height dishwashers are available to fit under the worktop, or in tall cabinets alongside.

Cookers

The only viable option for the wheelchair user is to have a hob with a separate oven in a tall cupboard set +400 mm above FFL.

Select a hob with the control knobs in a row at the front.

Ovens should have side hung doors for easier wheelchair access to the oven. Wire shelves within the oven should have stops to prevent them being pulled out completely.

Refrigerators

Refrigerators should not be too tall or they will be inaccessible, and should be set with the bottom at +400 mm.

A small freezing compartment at the top should be provided, unless there is a separate freezer.

Other useful devices

A pull-out worktop at +660 mm will provide another work surface which is at a better height for a wheelchair user. This worktop could include an elliptical hole 190 mm wide × 170 mm deep, lined with flexible PVC to grip a mixing bowl.

Pull-out trolleys which will fit under worktops cannot only serve as trays, but can act as another work surface or be used for eating.

Small revolving carousel shelves, for frequently used jars and condiments, can sit on the worktop.

A wall telephone and entry phone fixed at about +1000 mm.

For other useful gadgets, see pp. 47 and 48 for the ambulant disabled kitchen.

Cabinets

There are manufacturers who specialise in reduced height cabinets and appliances specifically for the wheelchair user, who also offer free advice, site surveys and drawings based on individual needs.

Base units should be fitted with drawers and pull-out baskets, rather than fixed shelves. Carousel shelves should be fitted to corner cupboards.

Variable height worktops, freestanding and wall mounted, supported on cantilevered white plastic coated steel frames are useful where kitchens are shared – as in sheltered housing or occupational therapy departments.

The height of the worktops can vary between +650 and 910 mm, operated either by a detachable winding handle or a switched electronic 24 v motor.

The standard worktop lengths are 1000 and 1500 mm, with or without sink units.

Other configurations can be manufactured to order with a maximum length of 3000 mm.

Sources: AKW Medi-care Ltd
Keep Able
N&C Phlexicare
Designing for the Disabled