



Independent Living Centre
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CHOOSING A BATH LIFT

There is a vast range of bathing equipment on the market, and it can be hard to know where to start. If you have access to the internet then please have a look at the Moray Council Website www.moray.gov.uk and search for 'Aids to Independent Living Films'. It is a series of short films which you may find useful and includes a specific section on bathing and showering.

IF basic non powered bath seats have been ruled out then the next level is a powered bath seat.

There are three main types of powered bath lifts available on the market. All have battery packs which are usually contained within the chairs hand control. These can be charged in a convenient location such as a kitchen worktop, and can simply be connected to the unit when you want to use it.



The model shown is the Belavita bathlift with extended headrest and swivel cushion. Prices start at £225 (excluding VAT, delivery and optional accessories)

1. **Powered Bath Lift.** (pictured above) These are chairs which sit on a frame and rise up to the height of the bath allowing you to sit at a comfortable height to lift your legs in over the side of the bath, rather than climbing in. By pressing a button on a handset, you can be lowered down to within around two inches of the bottom of the bath, and raised back to the bath height when finished.

Most seats also have a recline function for the back rest and secure to the bottom of the bath with four suckers. These chairs are quite heavy to lift in and out of the bath, but some models can be separated into two parts to make this easier .

Optional accessories are available with some models and include extended head rest, gel cushions, and turntable.

2. **Inflatable Bath Seat.** (pictured below) These cushion type seats are connected to a battery powered compressor which inflates/deflates the seat and is used in a similar way to the powered bath lift. These are lightweight and portable making them easy to remove from the bath, to store or take on holiday.

You do however require good sitting balance in order to use these, so they are not suitable for everybody and are best suited to individuals who do not have a progressive disability.

These do lower you to the bottom of the bath however the battery is built into the compressor unit and can be quite heavy to carry from its charging point to the bathroom.



Model shown is the Mangor bathing cushion. Prices start at £499 for cushion and compressor (excluding VAT and delivery)

3. **Bath Seat with Retractable Band.** (pictured below) These bath seats are attached by a battery powered or hard wired unit to the wall at the back of the bath and release a band which must be attached to a bracket secured to the floor. Again, these work on the same principal of allowing you to sit and lift your legs into the bath however the band will readjust itself to the correct tension once body weight is applied causing sudden movement to the user.

You will need to have very good sitting balance to use this, particularly as there is no back support and you will need to be able to re-adjust your position frequently while being lifted and lowered.

These are best suited to those with a stable condition, who have good balance, core stability and upper body strength and are not suited to those who require physical assistance to lift their legs over the side of the bath.

Most companies who supply these will insist on a survey visit being carried out in your home and the price quoted after assessment will often be considerably more than the 'from' price stated on their advertisements. As this item needs to be fitted it is not possible to try this item in your own home prior to making a purchase.



Model shown is the CareCo Aquabathe Bath Lift. Prices start at £999 (excluding VAT, delivery and fitting)

Points to consider before making a purchase:

- Can you use it independently?
 - a) Does it go high enough to get your legs over the rim of the bath?
 - b) Can you press the control? (Some need less pressure than others).
 - c) Can you reach the bath taps?
 - d) Can you charge it up?
 - e) Try it in your own bath if possible before you buy?
- Will it fit in your bath?
- How heavy is it if you want to lift it in and out regularly? Try this before you buy – the suckers can stick like glue!
- Is it comfortable enough for a good long soak? Padded models are available.
- Would you like to recline in the bath? If there is no back on your bath lift you will not be so stable going up and down. Reclining models with backs are available.
- Do you need a swivelling seat to help you get in and out of the bath? These are available on some models
- Will it take your weight? All bath seats have an upper weight limit and are typically 18 to 22 stone. Although heavier weight limits are available on certain models.
- When sitting in the water on your lift can you stretch out your legs and get covered in water?
- Do you really feel safe and steady on the lift? Or could you possibly trap any part of your body such as fingers?
- If you are buying for someone else – will they understand the instructions and find the lift easy to use?
- Can you wash your bottom easily? or would a bidet type seat be better?
- Does your bath have handles on it? Is it an unusual shape? Does it have a bobbly bottom surface? This may affect the use of the lift in your bath. Try before you buy and check the manufacturers' instructions.
- How many lifts will you get before the battery needs re-charging?
- Do you use bath oil or ointment in the bath? Check these are OK with the bath lift you intend to buy.
- Who is going to clean it and how?
- Where will you store it if you do lift it out?

- Will you want to take it away with you when you visit friends and family?
- Do you have a corner or sunken bath? Specific lifts are available.
- What price is it?
- Would you prefer reconditioned or second-hand?
- Are looks and colour important to you? Some companies offer a choice.

For further information please contact us on 01343 559461

Email: info.ilc@moray.gov.uk

OR look on www.moray.gov.uk and search for Independent Living Centre