



**National
Multiple Sclerosis
Society**
Minnesota
Chapter

200 12th Ave. S.
Minneapolis, MN 55415-1255
Tel (612) 335-7900
1-800-582-5296
Fax (612) 335-7997
www.MSociety.org

Three- and Four-Wheel Scooter Buyer's Guide

A practical, common-sense list of important things to know and think about when shopping for a three- or four-wheel scooter.

This guide focuses on three basic areas:

1. Defining your needs
2. Selecting a local professional dealer
3. Selecting your scooter

Gathering this information and organizing your questions and answers will ensure that your scooter shopping experience is a pleasant one. This will benefit you and your scooter.

Use this buyer's guide to help you gather and record information and keep it with you as you go scooter shopping.

1. Defining your needs

From the start, take time to understand what you expect from a scooter, and where and how you will use it. Write down your answers to the following questions and discuss them when you talk to your local professional dealer. Some vital points are:

A. How accessible is my home or living quarters?

What is the width of the most narrow door that I will go through? _____

What are the dimensions of tight or confined areas that I might operate in? _____

How tall are any thresholds or steps that I might have to navigate? _____

B. Where and when will I use my scooter?

- Primarily indoors
- Both indoors and outdoors
- Primarily outdoors
- Daylight only
- Night only
- Night and day

C. Will I transport my scooter from one place to another? Yes No

From my living quarters to someone else's? Yes No

From my living quarters to a commercial location? Yes No

From my living quarters to an outdoor location? Yes No

D. I transport my scooter: Frequently Infrequently

E. How will I transport my scooter?

- By car, van or truck (make and model) _____
- By public transportation, airplane or train _____

F. How much will I use my scooter?

_____ Hours per day
_____ Days per week

G. What are my height and weight?

_____ feet/inches _____ pounds.

H. Any special dexterity or transfer needs or considerations?

I. What types of accessories and options might I like?

- A canopy for rain or sun
- A power seat lift
- Cupholders, baskets, bags, etc. _____

J. How do I anticipate paying for my scooter?

- I expect to pay cash for it (cash, check, or credit card)
- I will seek third-party payment (Medicare, private insurance, HMO, PPO, etc.). Please list:

K. What type(s) of insurance do I have?

2. Selecting a local professional dealer

Local professional dealers have many vital functions. To name a few, they provide you with information; they have a selection of scooters to choose from; they will demonstrate scooters to you; and most importantly they provide local service. Scooter manufacturers are happy to recommend a local professional dealer. Listed below are some important questions to consider. A professional dealer will openly answer these and all of your questions. If the answer to any of these questions is NO, you should seek an explanation.

A. Does the dealer have a selection of scooters in stock? Yes No

You should be able to take any scooter for a test drive.

B. Will the dealer come to my home to demonstrate the scooter? Yes No

You should know if the scooter will meet your needs.

C. Is the dealer reputable? Yes No

D. Does the dealer seem established by a visible commitment to the business? Yes No

Ask about recommendations/referrals from previous or current customers.

E. Is the dealer listed in the Yellow Pages directory? Yes No

This is a great indicator of a dealer's legitimacy.

F. Does someone answer the phone when I call? Yes No

An answering service is not bad, but a happy human indicates a commitment to the business.

G. Does the dealer offer both sales and service? Yes No

Be sure that you know that you can benefit from prompt local service if needed.

H. Is the dealer factory-trained by the scooter manufacturer? Yes No

I. Does the dealer listen to me instead of talk at me? Yes No

A professional dealer spends time understanding your needs.

J. Does the dealer respond favorably to my organized shopping approach? Yes No

A professional dealer will welcome your questions and organization.

K. Are the sales personnel knowledgeable about their products? Yes No

Are they able to match my needs with the appropriate scooter?

L. Will the dealer advise me on third-party payer information? Yes No

Do they give me honest information? Yes No

Will they help me submit reimbursement claims? Yes No

M. List the names and phone numbers of those that apply:

My Neurologist

My Physical Therapist

My Occupational Therapist

name

name

name

phone number

phone number

phone number

3. Selecting your scooter

Because they are considered medical devices, scooters are manufactured to meet or exceed the standards of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration Good Manufacturing Practices (FDA-GMP). In addition, in 1982, ANSI/RESNA Wheelchair (also addresses scooters) Standards Committee was formed to develop standard procedures for testing and comparing scooters and wheelchairs. The combination of these assures that scooters must be built to meet rigorous quality requirements, and that their performance claims should be readily compared.

It is very important that you know all you can about scooters. Be sure to understand both the fundamental strengths and weaknesses of scooters, and the validity of the information source. Professional sales people are able to answer the majority of your questions. You should also talk with the service personnel, as they have intimate knowledge about the reliability and durability of scooters.

A. What are the two or three main features of each manufacturer's products?

These are the fundamental strengths of each manufacturer's scooters.

B. What are the safety, reliability and comfort features of each model?

Gather this core information to ensure your ability to make a valuable comparison.

C. What is the manufacturer's warranty?

Accept no fewer than three years and be sure that it covers the important parts like motors, transaxle and electronics.

D. Are extended warranties available? Yes No

How long are extended warranties? _____

E. Does the scooter manufacturer inspect every scooter prior to shipment? Yes No

F. Do the electronics contain Electro-Magnetic Interference (EMI) Shielding?

Yes No

EMI shielding protects the scooter operation from external interference from two-way radios, garage door openers, etc.

G. How stable is each scooter?

What is the Maximum Incline Stability Rating? _____

Under no circumstances should it be less than 5 degrees at the scooter's weight capacity.

Does the scooter's top speed promote instability? Yes No

H. How reliable are the scooters? _____

In addition to the sales person's experience, speak to Service Department personnel. Ask them which units they feel have the lowest repair incidence.

I. How durable is the scooter's exterior? _____

Most scooters are painted and will develop scratches and dings through normal everyday use. They can be repainted, but at a considerable expense. Scooters with molded-in color retain their neat appearance for many years, are easy to maintain, and do not require repainting or retouching.

J. Is the seat comfortable and resilient — does it fit, feel good, and is it built to last?

Yes No

K. Does the scooter separate (disassemble and reassemble) easily? Yes No

A simple, clean separation system makes for easy scooter transportation. Ask for a demonstration.

L. Is the manufacturer's sales literature complete? Yes No

Demand to look at the owner's manuals of all scooters and confirm that all important specifications in the owner's manual mirror claims made in the sales literature.

M. Are the seat and tiller adjustable to fit my needs? Yes No

Ask for a demonstration.

N. Are a broad range of options and accessories available? Yes No

Ask to see literature and samples.

Conclusion

Three- and four-wheel scooters are fun and reliable products that can assist you in increasing your mobility and allow you to increase your independence. Be sure to have this completed buyer's guide with you when you shop for a scooter. Most importantly, ask your local professional dealer questions and be comfortable with the answer to your questions.

Additional questions, notes and thoughts
