

## WALKWAYS & RAMPS

### Standards:

- The typical maximum slope for comfortable use with a manual wheelchair: 1:12. The ramp raises 1 foot across a distance of 12 feet.
- The typical upper rail height on a walkway or ramp is between 32 inches and 36 inches.

### I believe in choice:

- There are no official regulations when it comes to creating a ramp in a private home, but navigating steeper walkways and ramps with a hand-propelled wheelchair would take too much muscle power. With an electric wheelchair a steeper ramp is possible (1½:12).
- It is nice to have an upper and a lower rail on a ramp so you have a choice where you put your hand.

### Tips:

- Sloped walkways are not only for wheelchair users, they are good for everything on wheels, from shopping carts to strollers to bicycles.
- Test what feels good for you when you go out. Take a tape measure and record your experiences with rails. We all have different bodies and our home should fit us like a glove. Standards are a good place of departure but you are the judge. It pays off to be thorough and test what works for you like my client did.

### Some other thoughts:

- Make sure walking surfaces are even. As we age, it becomes more difficult to react to obstacles on the ground. Even a little unevenness, something a young person might not even notice, can be treacherous for older adults. If you do not have a smooth walkway, mark the protrusions with some spray paint - not that pretty but a saver!
- In my client's outdoor shower, we installed a body dryer because toweling off proved to be a challenge as her MS progressed. There's no specific product that we recommend, but just googling "body dryer" could give you some ideas. Some options are plug-ins and easy to install.

