



ABOUT THE PARAGOLFER

The ParaGolfer is an all-terrain wheelchair that raises the user into a standing position, to allow a more conventional golf swing.

The ParaGolfer is able to access most areas of the golf course. Its low-pressure tyres and wide stance allow it to be used on all areas of the golf course (including greens and appropriately designed bunkers), and on the driving range and practice area.

For the founder of Empower Golf, James Gribble, the ParaGolfer was the missing link to his return to the game he loved.

You can try a ParaGolfer at any of our regular Come and Try Golf clinics at Parkwood Golf Course. ParaGolfers are available to hire there at any time at but a booking must be made in advance.

Apart from golf, the ParaGolfer can be used for any activity that would benefit from its all-terrain capabilities and stand-up functionality. Our players have used it for activities such as fishing, archery, photography, shooting, and just hugging a loved one.

The ParaGolfer is regularly used by people with high level spinal cord injuries, but can also be used by anyone with mobility or stability issues.



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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Do I need Specialist training to use the ParaGolfer?

Empower Golf and specially trained staff at Parkwood Golf Course, run ParaGolfer training sessions. The training covers the basic operation, maintenance and set up of the ParaGolfer and how to safely use it around a golf course. Once a player has completed their ParaGolfer training, they can hire a one at a number of Empower Golf Hubs around the country. The one off training costs \$199. Contact Ben Tullipan through the booking form to discuss funding options if required.

Can you take the ParaGolfer onto the Greens?

Yes, the ParaGolfer has been specifically designed for golf. Its wide stance and low-pressure tyres spread the weight of the ParaGolfer across a wide footprint producing less pressure than a human step. This enables the ParaGolfer to be used on greens without causing any damage. During specialised ParaGolfer training, users are shown how to manoeuvre the device comfortably across the greens limiting sharp turns where possible. Clearly, when greens are unusually wet due to recent weather or watering, greater care should be taken to avoid damage.

Can the ParaGolfer get you into Bunkers?

This depends on the design of the bunker. If the back lip of the bunker is level with the surrounding fairway, then is possible to pilot the ParaGolfer in and out of a bunker. One could argue that the shape of the rear of a bunker has minimal impact on the difficulty of the hole, compared to the shape of the front of the bunker. We anticipate that accessible bunkers will become the norm, as the use of ParaGolfers becomes more widespread.

Does AGCSA approve the ParaGolfer?

This is a statement issued by Peter Frewin, CEO of The Australian Golf Course Superintendents Association (AGCSA) regarding their support for the ParaGolfer. 'The AGCSA wishes James, Empower Golf and Golf Australia all the best

in their endeavours to promote the use of ParaGolfer in golf's private and public sectors. The AGCSA does not "endorse" products as such but given the unique nature of the ParaGolfer and its potential to get more people experiencing golf we are of the belief that it can only be of benefit to the industry as a whole. Like any vehicle of this type, training of the operator is paramount; our experience would indicate that with prudent use the ParaGolfer should not impact turf surfaces under normal conditions.' Clearly, when greens are unusually wet due to recent weather or watering, greater care should be taken to avoid damage.

Can the ParaGolfer be used for other activities?

Yes, the ParaGolfer can be used for bushwalking, fishing, bird watching, shooting and any other activity where its all-terrain abilities and stand-up abilities are beneficial. We even had an ex-baseballer use it to hit balls in a batting cage recently! Perhaps most importantly, it is perfect for stand-up hugs with loved ones. For many, the initial experience in the ParaGolfer is both the first time they've been able to stand up after injury and embrace their children or partner properly.

Are ParaGolfers available for hire?

ParaGolfers are available for hire (just like a golf cart) at Parkwood Golf Course on the Gold Coast. Each club has its own conditions of use, so it is wise to call ahead to check for availability. Empower Golf are also currently in discussions with 20 new locations around the country.

What does the ParaGolfer weigh?

The ParaGolfer weighs approximately 200kg. This weight is required to provide a steady platform and to offset the dynamic forces generated from a golf swing. However, with its low-pressure tyres and wide stance, it spreads its weight across a wide footprint.

What does the ParaGolfer cost and where can I buy one?

Depending on final set-up specifications, the ParaGolfer costs between \$34,000 – \$39,000 dollars, which is comparable to other standup wheelchairs. If you wish to use the ParaGolfer at more than one location, we recommend a trailer to transport it. This costs around \$5000. Please contact James Gribble or call 0466-825 044 to purchase and to discuss funding options.

Where can I try a ParaGolfer?

The best place to try a ParaGolfer is at one of our regular Come and Try Golf Clinics. Please fill out the form to enquire about come and try clinics.

Can the ParaGolfer be used as your daily wheelchair?

To allow greater stability while swinging a golf club, the ParaGolfer is wider than a standard wheelchair. This can place additional restrictions on where a ParaGolfer can access, compared to a standard wheelchair. The ParaGolfer uses a rear castor system for steering which can affect its manoeuvrability in tight environments, but this is also a question of the user skill. There are people who use a ParaGolfer as a daily mobility device, but they tend to be regional users where space and door widths are less constricted.

Are there any disadvantages to the ParaGolfer?

The ParaGolfer has a chest strap which provides upper body stability for people with limited core strength. This can place restrictions on the freedom of a standard two-handed golf drive. As a result, many players find it easier to use a one-handed swing. Because of its width, the ParaGolfer is unable to fit in most wheelchair friendly vehicles and taxis and therefore can require a trailer for transport. Similarly, sometimes a user may need to transfer to their day chair to use standard accessible toilets. Also, the ParaGolfer attracts a lot of attention from other players, so leave a little extra time to chat to other players who will be very interested in the ParaGolfer.

Is there anything special I should do before using the ParaGolfer for the first time?

The ParaGolfer exerts firm pressure around your knees, to prevent you falling out when standing. If you have concerns about your bone density, please contact your GP for a bone density check before using the ParaGolfer. If you have not used a standing wheelchair before, you will be shown how to raise yourself in a series of small stages to allow your blood pressure to equalise, and prevent dizziness or fainting. Also, for people who are longterm wheelchair users, special attention needs to be paid to their hamstring flexibility whilst transitioning to standing position. And as with any new chair, users need to be mindful of potential new areas of pressure.

Is it easy to transfer into and out of the ParaGolfer?

Transferring into and out of a ParaGolfer is much like transferring into or out of any other wheelchair, but with the added advantage that it is very stable. The arm rests can be removed if this helps. The user should use their normal transfer technique, including assistance if required.

