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Mobility aids for seniors have been around for hundreds of years if we take into account low tech solutions like staffs and walking sticks, it seems pretty natural to use a stick for balance if you're struggling, and these days even fit people who walk for fun or exercise use walking poles to help them along. Though these poles are a little more high tech than the humble wooden staff, often being made of synthetic materials like aluminum, they often come complete with a range of gadgets like led torches and compasses, and price tags to match.

Walking sticks, also known as assistive canes, were traditionally wood and were useful to those with a leg injury or debilitating ailment. Some times two walking sticks were necessary but of course that severely limits the user's ability to do anything but walk, having no hands free to hold or carry anything.

Crutches are another traditional aid to walking for the injured or disabled, modern crutches are more likely to have a hand grip and an elbow support rather than fitting under the armpit as they used to do.

A great advance in walking aids for the elderly was the invention of the walking frame or walker as it's more commonly known, they're often also generically known as "Zimmer frames" after the company's products, much in the way vacuum cleaners are generally called "Hoovers". Andrej Muiza patented a type of walker in May 1988. The basic design of walkers is a lightweight aluminum frame of approximately waist height and it is wide enough for the user to stand inside it, the top of the frame also acts as a handle bar.

More modern advances in the design have led to simple improvements such as wheels on the front of the walker so that the user doesn't have to lift it off the ground, which is of great benefit to those with limited strength in their upper body.

Another advance in design of walkers is the wheeled walker which was invented in 1978 by the Swede Aina Wifalk, and also called "rollators". An essential part of the design of a wheeled walker is the addition of brakes which can be operated by the use of levers on the handles. It enables the user to stop immediately and prevents the rollators from running away from them. The brakes can also assist in turning, as they can be applied on just the side to which the user is turning, allowing a much tighter turn to be made.

Wheeled walkers come in a wide variety of designs, with 3 or 4 wheels, and some with larger diameter wheels, usually of at least 7 inches which make it easier to travel over uneven terrain, "Off road" if you will. This enables the user to venture out doors more for shopping trips and the like.

With the aim of practicality in mind the modern rollators also come with a variety of accessories which may be standard equipment or "add ons". These include everything from, seats, back rests, shopping baskets, and pouches, to phone and drinks holders. They also come in a range of attractive colors, I wouldn't be surprised to see customized ones with flame decals!

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