

## The History of Toilevator

The idea for Toilevator came from the research team at the Center for Studies in Aging (CSiA) – a division of Sunnybrook Health Sciences Center, Canada's largest Trauma Hospital. Sunnybrook is an academic hospital affiliated with the University of Toronto. The research team included medical engineers, physical and occupational therapists, nurses and industrial designers. CSiA was then under the direction and management of Professor Geoff Fernie, PhD. The mandate for Geoff's team was research and development into the betterment of the lives of people with physical and cognitive challenges often associated with aging.. These challenges have the potential to reduce the dignity and quality of life for anyone being affected by them. Geoff was asked to come up with a better solution to the raised toilet seats that fit onto the top of standard height toilets, in order to raise them to ADA standards. Raised toilet seats are notoriously unsafe, unsightly and unsanitary.

After a few team think tank discussions the idea of raising the entire toilet and not only the toilet seat formed. This had the advantage that people could still use their toilet in the manner that it was designed. After a few pre-prototypes were built and experimented with, the current Toilevator design idea took shape. A pre-production unit was manufactured and went through rigorous testing, with further design tweaks. The final design had to be in a kit form that was complete, and it had to be easy to install by a tradesman or DIY handyman.

At this stage Andy Hart, HartMobility's founder and owner, became involved. Andy became the Licensee for Toilevator and agreed to commercially manufacture Toilevator and to set up a distribution network. This arrangement between Sunnybrook and Hartmobility is successful and Toilevator is widely available throughout North America.

The final Toilevator design has the advantage that it blends in and is not noticed when installed in an existing bathroom – not at all like the raised toilet seats that make the bathroom look “disabled”. Toilevator is suitable to use with almost every style of toilet available, and is easy to install. Further, Toilevator can be uninstalled if no longer required, or if the owner moves and wishes to take their Toilevator with them to their new location.

Toilevator achieved the objectives of Geoff and his team – to better the lives of people who needed this assistance in their daily lives.

Since its introduction in 2000 Toilevator has won awards for outstanding design, and continues to enjoy good sales. Toilevator is patented and the Toilevator is a Registered Trademark.

Professor Fernie has moved and now leads the teams at iDAPT, an advanced research and design facility at the Toronto Rehabilitation Institute, Canada’s leading Rehabilitation Facility, and a member of the University Health Network. Geoff and Andy continue to collaborate and HartMobility manufactures and sells many innovative new products resulting from this collaboration.