

Pfronstetten-Aichelau, 12 May 2023

Foot steering thanks to Space Drive

Ingrid Höhling is relaxed and safely mobile again. With Space Drive foot steering, she can now steer her new VW Caddy 5 with her left foot without much effort and without tiring.



Ingrid Höhling has been driving her car since 1982 - until now with the "Franz system". But with her legs losing strength, she can no longer safely participate in road traffic. Thanks to foot steering with Space Drive, this is now possible again. PHOTO: PARAVAN

Steering with her foot has been routine for the 75-year-old pensioner for over 40 years. But at some point, her strength began to wane and another solution had to be found. Since the summer of 2022, Ingrid has been driving with electronic foot steering. Thanks to the Space Drive driving and steering system, this is now possible without much effort. The control unit is installed in her new VW Caddy on the left side in the footwell, right next to the accelerator and brake. She can now operate the steering with her left foot and the accelerator and brake with her right foot. She controls all other secondary functions with PARAVAN Touch or with the voice control. She can also start the vehicle and operate the gear selection function with this system.

She does not need any assistance to get into the vehicle either. The door opens electrically by remote control. The attachment for the three-point seat belt is anchored directly in the door, so that she only has to sit in the car seat; as soon as the door closes, she is also properly and safely strapped in. There are also pads to the right and left of the driver's seat to give her support and stabilisation. "I feel like the princess on the pea," she says. Padding has also been individually arranged on the passenger side. "I have no support in my arms, when centrifugal forces occur, my arms would always slip. I can't hold them independently," she explains.

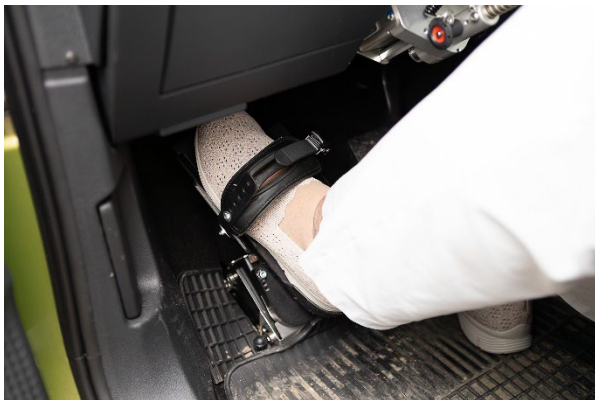
PRESS RELEASE

In 1953, at the age of five, Ingrid received a series of vaccinations at kindergarten - as was the custom at the time. Unfortunately, she got polio afterwards. "I was just unlucky, there was no polio vaccination at all back then," says Ingrid. An odyssey then began for the child. Thank God she had a teacher who supported her by simply sliding a bed into the classroom with her to rest on when she could no longer sit. "That was early inclusion," she says. "I owe what I am today to her."

She struggled back then, but the functionality of her arms remains limited. The right one more than the left, but the assistant tax consultant was able to learn a trade and pursue it. She has been driving a car since 1982. She was lucky then, too. A driving instructor stood up for her and made sure that she could drive with the Franz system - a mechanical system that can also be operated with the foot. It worked with the foot-operated steering system, and she drove with it until 2022. Then it no longer worked. "Postpolio has increasingly affected my strength in my leg," the pensioner reports.

With the Space Drive foot-steering system, she is once again flexible and, above all, can travel safely without effort. "I can now put on any shoe and don't have to be on the move with one specially adapted to the steering pedal as with the Franz system," reports Ingrid of the advantages. It was easy for her to switch to the new system, where she no longer has to make the steering movements vertically by turning, but horizontally by simply moving her foot to the right or left. After the conversion last year, she only had to do a few test drives and then she could drive to the TÜV. This is a prerequisite for getting the corresponding mark on her driving licence.

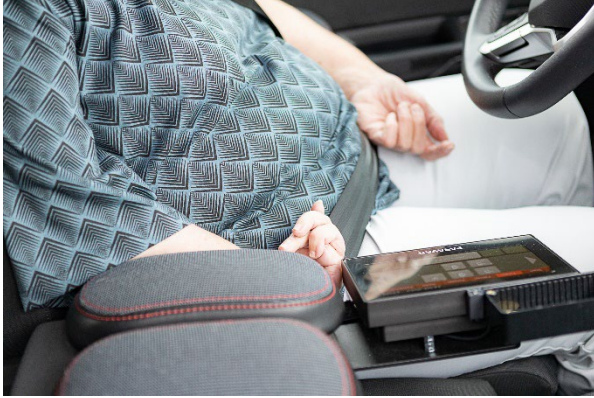
After a good 5,000 kilometres, Ingrid draws a positive balance. "For me, the car means a great relief and freedom, so I can drive to the doctor independently and also go on a few trips without having to rely on help from others. She drives longer distances together with her husband. "We take turns.



When the arms no longer work, the only thing left is the foot. Thanks to Space Drive, however, this is no problem. The input device on the electronic steering can also be placed in the footwell without any problems. Photo: PARAVAN



The goal of every PARAVAN mobility solution is flexibility and independence for the customer with a handicap. However, this also means that he or she must be able to get into the car without outside help. This is done here with the help of an electric door opening. The three-point belt is fitted in the door, so Ingrid Höhling can easily get into the car and drive off on her own. Photo: PARAVAN

PRESS RELEASE

Since Ingrid Höhling has no strength in her arms, her arms are supported in the vehicle by pads and fixed in place to some extent. This gives her a firm hold even when centrifugal forces occur while driving. Photo: PARAVAN

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About Paravan GmbH:

PARAVAN GmbH is the world market leader for highly individual vehicle solutions for the disabled. Around 180 employees develop and produce individually adapted automobile conversions, electric wheelchairs and even specially specialized driver training. PARAVAN pursues a holistic approach with its "one-stop concept". The technological highlight is Space Drive, an intelligent digital control system based on the drive-by-wire principle. Thanks to the active redundancy of the servo motors, it is completely fail-safe and the first to be approved for road use. With the help of this innovation, severely disabled people, some without arms or legs, can drive independently and safely. It is not possible for these drivers to simply intervene in the steering wheel. Worldwide, Space Drive has proven itself on over one billion road kilometers in the last 20 years and is used by numerous industrial customers for test vehicles in the field of autonomous driving. The system is available as a retrofit kit with an open interface for all known vehicle types. <http://www.paravan.com>