

## Is the Segway the next big thing in prosthetics and orthotics??

Have you heard about the Segway? The device is an electrically powered, precisely balance controlled mobility device. **REHABTech** has been following the progress of the Segway since its launch (and previous to that the iBot or Independence 3000 wheelchair.) see: <http://rehabtech.eng.monash.edu.au/seat/link.htm>

Recently the device was launched onto the consumer market and is for the moment only available in the USA. The makers of the Segway do not recommend it for use by anyone with a disability, however the design aims of the device mean that it will almost certainly be an ideal adjunct to many with mobility issues.

The Segway is designed for transport, but not to replace the car, but to fit into that vague in between distance – **too far to walk, but too much trouble to take a car or public transport**. Whilst this is going to be difficult to establish for many in the general population, there is no doubt that many users of prosthetic and orthotic devices know exactly what that distance is and feel that the "in between distance" is currently much too large. The device still requires the user to be able to step, stand, lean forward and back as well as have generally reasonable balancing skills. (The balance is used for control. Whilst you are unlikely to fall off it, as you would with a skateboard, you need balance to control the forward and back movement as well as left hand function to control the turning).

It currently costs around AUD \$8,500 and even at that price will not look too expensive as compared to many complex pieces of assistive technology. (Not that we are suggesting it may replace these).

The inventor Dean Kamen says *"Imagine you woke up one morning and your legs had been replaced by wheels"*. There are many people that do wake every morning to find that their legs or leg functions are missing or limited and would like to see any improvement—whether it be wheels or otherwise.



Figure 1 - typical Segway configuration. Please note: this is a digitally enhanced image, there is not a SEGWAY at REHAB Tech

## Clinical Management of Upper Limb Amputees Extension of early bird registration

Due to problems that some people had receiving the flyer for the Clinical Management of Upper Limb Amputees course, the early bird registration has been extended to the week before the commencement of the course. There are still a few vacancies and people should register their interest immediately. The offer of early bird registration will be available until February 14<sup>th</sup> or until the vacancies are filled.

Please address correspondence to: The Editor- **Tech LINK**  
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INTERNET - <http://www.monash.edu.au/rehabtech/>

**Update Seminar: Friday 4th of April 9:00am – 10 am**  
**"The role of the surgeon in achieving and maintaining an optimal stump"**  
*Dr Rene Baumgartner*

Details of this update seminar will be mailed out soon BUT put it into your diary now!

**Positions Vacant - Job WATCH**

Please visit our website <http://www.monash.edu.au/rehabtech/employ.htm>  
for detailed information on vacancies as they occur.

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## 2003 Calendar of events

**REHAB Tech** is currently organising some exciting events and innovations that are due for release this year. If you have events that you would like to see listed please contact our services coordinator, Maree Boehm (03) 95281960 or [maree.boehm@eng.monash.edu.au](mailto:maree.boehm@eng.monash.edu.au) with details as soon as possible. The calendar is already filling fast as the "sneak preview" below shows.

## COMING EVENTS

17–21 February 2003	<b>Lower Limb Prosthetics and Amputee Rehabilitation Course—Melbourne</b> Contact <b>REHABTech</b> 03 9528 1960
24–28 February 2003	<b>Clinical Management of Upper Limb Amputees—Melbourne</b> Contact <b>REHABTech</b> 03 9528 1960
21–23 March 2003	<b>Prosthetics, Orthotics and Rehabilitation in the New Century—Wellington NZ</b> Fax "Prosth-TH-otics" Congress 0064 4 494 6133
29 March 2003	<b>OPST Tasmania Open day—Hobart</b> (including <b>REHABTech</b> research display) contact Weston Wiggins OPST (03) 6222 7377
4 April 2003	<b>Update Seminar—(Australia wide)</b> "The role of the surgeon in achieving and maintaining an optimal stump" – Dr Rene Baumgartner, contact <b>REHABTech</b> 03 9528 1960
1–3 May 2003	<b>Material Science and P&amp;O design - Maximising patient safety – American Academy of Orthotist and Prosthetists—Chicago</b> contact <b>REHABTech</b> 03 9528 1960

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