



Clever Solutions For Savvy Seniors

Resource Manual
Identifying easily accessible everyday objects
and tips to simplify tasks for Seniors

Acknowledgements

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Visit the Department of Health website agedcare.health.gov.au

Introduction

This resource was developed by the Northern Collaborative Project Community Ambassadors Work Group in conjunction with the City of Salisbury and additional information supplied by Department of Human Services.

The resource is a practical guide with information on the most efficient and safest way to undertake everyday tasks by seniors, often with the aid of assistive technology.

Assistive technology may be classified as a device or system that provides people with practical solutions to everyday life activities. It promotes greater independence and safety by enabling people to perform tasks that they have difficulty with or are unable to accomplish on their own.

This resource includes a range of assistive technology items with links to additional information to inform seniors how to maintain their independence and therefore their wellbeing in managing many everyday tasks in their daily lives.

Wellness for seniors involves a complex relationship between numerous factors including personal choices, life events, a supportive environment, strong community connections and a health system that contributes and supports the pursuit of independence.

The resource *Clever Solutions for Savvy Seniors* does not recommend any specific item, any particular solution or any particular supplier. What it hopes to elicit is a general understanding that there may be a number of solutions for individuals to achieve a positive outcome to assist them in managing their personal everyday challenges.

It should be noted therefore that not all of the resources and suppliers detailed are the only ones available.

There are a number of innovative people in our community who have developed specific items and ideas to assist in their daily lives. If this booklet does not provide you with a solution, talk to your family, neighbours, friends or members of your community groups, you will be surprised. There are solutions out there. Talk to each other.

Remember 'Necessity is the mother of invention'. It is anticipated that this Resource will be revised annually.

www.health.nsw.gov.au/mentalhealth search 'wellbeing in later life'
lifetec.org.au/education search 'what is assistive technology'

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1. General Principles

The following information suggests some ways you can alter or simplify the tasks you do around your home. By keeping these in mind when you go about your daily routine, you will be able to complete a task in a more efficient way – saving time and energy to do other activities you enjoy.

Although you may feel some of the information included states the obvious, it may serve as a helpful reminder at times when you are busy or overly stressed.

Remember the ‘use it or lose it’ rule.

Prioritise

Prioritising involves deciding on the tasks that need to be done and the activities you want to do. If priorities are set when you plan your day, you can achieve the best outcomes and make the most of your energy.

- Think about whether the task needs to be done today?
Can I safely undertake this task?
What happens if it is not done today?
- Do the most important tasks before the least important. Look at your daily and weekly activities and list them in their order of importance to you.
- Get rid of unnecessary tasks;
 - * Consider finding a family member or friend to do other tasks
 - * Does the task need to be done at all?
- Remember to still include some time (and energy) to do something you enjoy. It is important that you still have time every day for yourself to relax - *you* may notice a little bit of dust, but your visitors won't. It is important to include a gentle physical activity on your ‘to do list’ every day, for example, a walk.

Plan Ahead

Planning involves deciding on when and how you are going to do a task.

- What time of the day are you at your best - morning? afternoon? Keep in mind the time of the day when you have more energy and plan to do more physically demanding tasks in that time.
- Spread jobs, especially big ones, throughout the week, so you do not overload yourself.
- Consider writing a plan for yourself and keeping it in an easy to see place such as on the fridge.
- Plan to do tasks in the mildest part of the day rather than in the hottest or coldest time. Working in hot or cold weather is tiring.
- Be aware of putting off tasks - do not allow the small, simple jobs to turn into one huge task.
- Think about the best order to do things which makes it easiest for you.



Prepare

Preparing involves setting up your working space and environment to improve your working conditions and reduce the impact on your body.

- Ensure there is adequate lighting and ventilation and that the area is not too hot or cold.
- Ensure you can get to frequently used items quickly and easily. Commonly used items can be left where they are used. For example set up a hot drink station on the bench with tea, coffee, sugar, cups, spoons and kettle placed together.
- Arrange cupboards so items are easy to see, reach and grasp. You use more energy and put more stress on your body if you bend or reach above shoulder level.
- Arrange materials, equipment and utensils to allow more efficient access and use.
- If something is inexpensive, consider purchasing more than one (eg two pairs of scissors) and store them separately to avoid unnecessary movement.
- Minimise clutter around your home (throw away or recycle unwanted items) and keep floor space as clear as possible to give you more room to work. Consider the floors and remove scatter rugs before they scatter you!
- Remember this is your home so set it up in the way that works best for you.



Pace

Pace involves the speed at which you work.

Working at a comfortable pace allows you to make the most of your energy in a day.

- Work at a comfortable, relaxed pace and avoid rushing.
- Take regular breaks and rest before feeling tired. It is better to do brief periods of activity, then rest, rather than working for a long period and then taking the afternoon or next day "off". This may mean a ten minute rest break every half hour. Think of it as recharging a battery before it runs out.
- Alternate jobs with different demands, for example, heavy and light, easy and difficult, sitting and standing.

Position

How your body is positioned when you do tasks can have a large impact on the amount of energy you use.

- Reduce bending down for things and reaching above shoulder level if having any difficulty with these movements.
- Consider using long handled items or other back-saving equipment such as a long handled dustpan or a pick up stick if you are having difficulty bending over.
- Ensure items are kept in easy-to-reach places, particularly heavy or awkward items such as the vacuum cleaner.

Lighten the Load

- Reduce the load carried with your arms and hands.
- Take several trips with smaller loads or use a trolley or traymobile.
- Slide heavy or awkward things using your whole body rather than lifting.
- Push rather than pull an object.
- Pull rather than lift an object.

Avoid Stress on the body

- Be aware of your overall posture, avoiding standing or bending for long periods of time. Where practical, do the task sitting down, preferably in a chair with back support and change position often.
- Keep your arms close to your body where possible. Avoid your wrists or hands being in awkward positions for a long time, for example, holding onto a book - there are items available to help you, just ask!
- Avoid standing still for a long period of time. Take a break such as a walk and allow your muscles time to relax.



2. General Household Tasks

General

- Spread out the cleaning tasks throughout the week / fortnight.
- For example, vacuum one room each day or have each day set aside to do a different job.
- Clean one room at a time and alternate between heavy and light tasks. For example vacuum one room and then dust another.
- If cleaning from one room to the next, put all the cleaning products and tools on a trolley and wheel to the next room. This prevents unnecessary trips to the cleaning cupboards.
- Take regular breaks to recharge the body and brain.
- If you don't use some rooms of your house, maybe you don't need to clean them as regularly.
- Before you start cleaning, don't forget to do some basic light stretches to warm up your muscles and joints.



Dusting

- High surfaces: Use a duster with a long handle or ask for help if you cannot reach.
- Use a damp cloth to remove the dust to avoid spreading it onto other surfaces.

Washing Windows

- Wash outside with a long-handled squeegee and a bucket when water restrictions do not allow the use of a hose.
- Inside, use long-handled equipment such as a sponge or chamois mounted on a broomstick.



General Household Tasks (continued)

Floors (Mopping, sweeping and vacuuming)

- Consider rinsing the mop head in the laundry sink or bath rather than carrying a heavy bucket of water around. Alternatively, use a bucket on wheels with a small amount of water or a microfibre mop that does not require a bucket of water.
- When rinsing the mop, let it soak for a few minutes to get the dirt out to prevent needing to squeeze it tightly.
- When filling / emptying a bucket, use a smaller jug to transfer water from the sink. For health reasons do not empty dirty water into the kitchen sink.
- Use a soft, light weight broom to sweep floors rather than a heavy broom with thick bristles. Avoid kneeling down by using a long handled dustpan and broom to pick up dirt from floor.
- Store the vacuum cleaner so no bending or lifting is required to get it in or out.
- When using the vacuum cleaner, try moving slowly and pushing it in front of you with the handle resting against one hip. This reduces the amount of bending and stretching you need to do when standing still and pushing with arms.
- If possible, adjust the height of the vacuum cleaner so it is at the correct height for you to avoid bending over. Remember it is the suction from the vacuum which removes dirt, not the amount of pressure you apply - move slowly.



Mops, Brooms and Dusters

- Some floors (laminated) will warp if exposed to a lot of water. Some mops available require no water to be used.

Long Handled Duster

- Long handled dusters/cobweb brooms can be purchased for around \$5 making those hard to get at places more accessible and prevents having to reach.

Long Handled Broom and Dustpan

- If you are experiencing difficulty bending and reaching when it comes to sweeping the floor you may find it beneficial to use a long handled brush and dustpan set.
- This combination will help you maintain independence when it comes to keeping the floor clear of litter.
- Check large discount stores or supermarkets for the best one for you; try it before you buy, check out the bristles on the brush.



General Household Tasks (continued)

Vacuum Cleaners - Upright, Barrel or Stick?

- The pros for an upright are that you are not pulling or dragging the cleaner behind you.
 - Often the brushes are wider and therefore more area can be covered with each movement.
 - The accessories can be stored on the cleaner.
 - The cons are that they can have a weaker suction power.
 - Not all uprights are able to be used on hard floors.
-
- Barrel vacuum cleaners can be used for carpets and hard floors.
 - Generally the barrel has a stronger suction and more attachments.
 - The cons for the barrel are that it can be cumbersome to pull around and the separate hose can be awkward to store.



- The pros for Stick vacuum cleaners are they combine the strength of a barrel cleaner and the convenience of an upright unit.
- Most are suitable for carpet and hard floors.
- They are lightweight and easy to use.
- The cons for Stick vacuums are battery life can limit the usage time.
- Attachments are stored separately.
- Do your homework to identify the right vacuum cleaner

for you, compare the warranties, specifications, cost, post sale service etc.

Organising small objects

- Organise small items so they are easier to locate.
- Spray can tops can be used for small items in medicine cabinets, drawers, jewellery box, craft items or kitchen cabinets.
- No need to purchase anything, simply save the tops of spray cans.



Pick up stick

- A pick up stick can be useful to reach things you have trouble getting to, such as items off the floor or in a high place.



General Household Tasks (continued)

Bath

- Does the bath tub need to be cleaned regularly? Can it be covered if not in use?

If it does need to be cleaned:

- Place a stool or chair beside the bath and have all cleaning equipment laid out.
- Use a mop or a rag attached to a long handle or tongs so you can sit beside the bath and clean it using a gentle back and forth motion of your arm.

Shower

- Clean the shower with a squeegee when you're showering. The warm water from your shower will soften the soap residue making it easier to clean.
- Use a shower chair or shower mat to reduce your risk of slipping.
- Using shower gel reduces the amount of soap scum and you will not need to clean the shower as regularly.

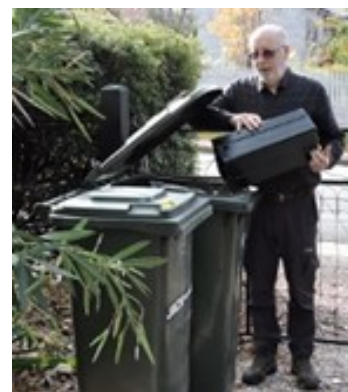
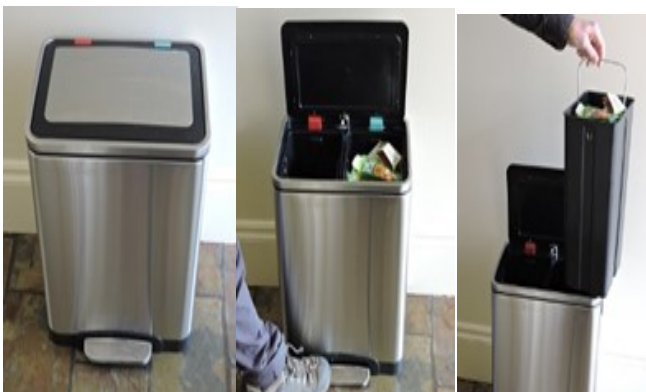


Oven

- Use a non-toxic spray-on oven cleaner that can be left overnight and reduce the need for scrubbing.

Taking the Bins Out

- Consider leaving the large roadside bins where they are easily reached and preferably near the front yard entrance or exit.
- Use lightweight bins and empty into roadside bins before they become full and heavy. Use a trolley if necessary.
- If you use an inside bin with compartments as in the photo below you have easy to lift out small bins that assist in sorting your waste between recyclable and non-recyclable. No need to use plastic liners, just wash out as and when required.
- Ask a neighbour or relative if you need assistance to put your roadside bin out when it is due for collection.



3. The Kitchen

Meal Preparation and Cooking

- Commonly used items can be left where they are used, for example a hot drink station on the bench with tea, coffee, sugar, cups, spoons and kettle placed together.
- Store saucepans and other heavy objects close to your working space to avoid having to hold and carry them far.
- Store frequently used items between knee and shoulder height. This prevents you having to bend down or reach up and saves your energy.
- Sit down at a table when preparing meals, for example, food can be chopped while sitting at the table. However, it is better to stand for short intervals than sit in an awkward position.
- Consider buying ready diced meat from the supermarket or ask the butcher to dice it for you. Pre-cut fresh and frozen vegetables from the supermarket may also be available.
- When boiling water in an electric kettle or jug, consider how much water you will need and only fill the kettle to that level. A small plastic jug can also be used to fill the kettle or jug to avoid having to lift the heavier kettle or jug to the tap.
- Consider using the microwave instead of the stove. This means you do not have to remain standing to ensure pots do not boil over.
- Where appropriate, consider using a tray or trolley to transfer food and equipment from one area to another.
- Use a rocking motion with the knife when cutting so the tip of the blade remains on the board - this prevents having to lift it repeatedly.
- Stabilise a mixing bowl by placing a damp rag or non-slip matting underneath – this reduces the effort required to hold the bowl while stirring.
- If there is a lot of preparation, consider completing some earlier in the day. You could also lay out all necessary utensils and unrefrigerated ingredients within easy reach of the work area ready for the evening meal.
- To reduce the amount of peeling, consider cooking certain vegetables including potatoes, carrots and pumpkin with the skins on. The skin can be cut off after it has cooked. If using unwashed potatoes scrub them first.
- Alternatively, use frozen vegetables as they offer the same nutritional content or pre-cut vegetables found in the fruit and vegetable department at your supermarket.



The Kitchen (continued)

Meal Preparation and Cooking (continued)

- Where possible, avoid lifting heavy pots and dishes of food by sliding them across the countertop.
- Put the pot on the stove empty and use a jug to transfer water from the sink to the pot. After cooking allow water to cool and use the same technique to empty.
- Vegetables can be served directly from the pot using a slotted or perforated spoon.
- Consider cooking larger amounts of food and if suitable, freeze excess for future meals. Alternatively, cook enough for two or three meals and put the excess on plates straight into the fridge.



Washing Up

- Let saucepans and other difficult dishes soak.
- Don't turn off taps too tightly.
- Use a dish rack and leave dishes to air-dry. This saves using unnecessary energy drying the dishes manually.



Assistance in the kitchen

Sliding Table

- Designed by TAD SA for a client who had a small kitchen. He wasn't able to move around in his wheelchair if he had a dining table so he ate his meals and operated his computer on his lap. The solution was to design and make a sliding table which he could pull over his lap for eating his meals and using his computer



Microwave

Consider using a microwave instead of an oven.

- The microwave was 50 years old in 2017, so the chances are all of our seniors have one. It could be time to check out a new one. A microwave oven is one of the most convenient appliances you can have in your kitchen. These days it's even possible for a microwave to replace your oven! The microwave has moved past just being there for heating food, its all about cooking food well.

The Kitchen (continued)

Assistance in the kitchen (continued)



Do you have difficulty removing lids from jars?

- One solution is to purchase a durable heat resistant, silicone **Textured Grip Mat** (as shown in the picture)
- Simply drape the mat over the jar lid and give it a twist.
- The one shown is heat resistant so the packaging says it can double as a trivet or pot holder.
- Textured heat resistant silicone jar opener costs around \$5 available from a kitchen equipment store.
- **Grip Cloth** can be useful if you have trouble gripping the lid of a jar when opening. Most large fabric stores will have different types of 'grip cloth' or 'non slip' cloth.
- A polyester mesh with a soft PVC coating which is purchased by the metre. It is designed to be slip resistant on all surfaces without sticking to the surface on which it is used.
- Simple yet effective, the Jar Opener, pictured right, is designed to pop the vacuum out of jars so the lid can be twisted off with ease. A fantastic helper for those with weak hands or arthritis. Works on ALL sized jars! This particular one is available from Aids for Daily Living. For more information visit:

www.aidsfordailyliving.com.au



Battery Operated Can Opener

- A battery operated can opener that does not require you to hold the can while operating.
- It is placed in position on the can and the button pushed. The opener stops automatically when the can top is completely cut. Suitable for use on a variety of cans and ring pull cans but will not work on rimless or odd shaped cans. Can be operated using the right or left hand.
- Check out Independent Living Centre for the suppliers of this and other battery operated can openers or view online at:



www.ilcaustralia.org.au

Double Handed Rocking Knife (Mezzaluna)

- Using a knife such as this is a fast and simple way to cut smaller items such as herbs. The knife is placed over food on chopping board and cuts using a side-to-side rocking motion.

Available from kitchenware stores.



The Kitchen (continued)

Assistance in the kitchen (continued)

Ergonomic Knives



- A range of kitchen knives which have a large plastic handle set at right angles to the blade. The angle of the handle places the wrist and the hand in a natural, relaxed working position, with the wrist straight and not twisted. The short distance from the grip to the centre of the blade also makes cutting easier. Slicing is achieved with a sawing action which uses the muscles of the arm in a smooth, strong movement. Stainless steel blades with polypropylene handles. Dishwasher safe.
- Check out Independent Living Centre: Visit: www.ilcaustralia.org.au

Chopping Boards

- A laminated board that has raised edges on one corner section to stabilise bread whilst buttering.



- Check out Independent Living Centres Australia for all chopping boards. Visit: www.ilcaustralia.org.au

Ring Pull Opener

- Opening ring pull cans can prove difficult. The clever J-hook design means much less effort is needed to open ring pull cans and containers. Visit: www.aidsfordailyliving.com.au



- Request a free catalogue at: www.aidsfordailyliving.com.au

4. The Laundry

Washing and hanging out clothes

- Do small loads regularly rather than letting it build up and find that you have a huge chore.
- Consider putting front opening machines (washers and dryers) on a stand to raise them to make it easier to put in and remove clothes.
- Use a trolley when transferring clothes in and out of a washing machine or dryer to limit bending.
- Sit on a chair which is at an appropriate height while doing hand washing. Have two tubs close by to use for washing and rinsing. This will make transferring clothes easier.
- Untangle clothes as you remove them from the machine. Don't lift the whole load out at once.
- Put wet clothes in a trolley and wheel to the line. If this is not possible, try to get someone to carry the clothes basket out and place on a stool under the line so you do not need to bend to the ground for each item.
- Carry the basket close to your body.
- Hang clothes on a clothes horse instead of a line if reaching up causes pain or difficulty.
- Consider using the clothes horse inside when the weather is either too hot or wet.
- Plastic or wooden push on pegs may be easier to use as they do not require the thumb and finger action of other pegs. Hang a peg bag on the side of the laundry trolley in order to reach pegs easily.
- Consider how you hang things on the clothesline to reduce the need to iron. Hang them flat on the line or use coat hangers to hang items.
- Sort clean clothes on a table, work bench or laundry trolley – not on the floor.



The Laundry (continued)

Ironing

- It may be easier to do a small amount of your ironing each day rather than wearing yourself out by doing it once a week.
- Clothes are more easily ironed if they are damp or have been folded as they are taken off the line.
- If possible, leave the ironing board set up all the time. To save bending down to low power sockets, consider using power boards with switches on each outlet. Put child proof plugs in unused sockets to keep out the dust. Alternatively, store the equipment in a place that is easy to get to.
- Use a light-weight ironing board that allows you to sit while ironing with the board about 5cm above your thighs or at hip level.
- Think about cutting back on ironing such as sheets, drip dry clothing and the like. Also, you may not need to iron an entire shirt that is to be worn under a jumper in winter - iron only the collar and cuffs.
- Try to avoid lifting the iron – slide it instead.



Items to assist in the Laundry

- Height adjustable clothesline

With the pull of a lever, the wheelchair bound client can raise and lower the clothesline. It enables her to easily hang out the washing then raise it up for the drying before lowering it to remove the washing.

- Laundry trolley

Available at most hardware or retail stores. Try the laundry trolley out in the store, check that it is fit for purpose and that it is suitable for your specific requirements.



If the product is wrapped and sealed ask if you can open it to check it out in the store. If not you can take it home and providing it is not damaged you will be able to return it under your consumer rights and guarantees. Just make sure you keep your receipts.

The Laundry (continued)

- Pegs

There are many different types of pegs - find the one that suits you best.

Plastic push pegs – old style pegs that can be pushed on rather than squeezed and are suitable for using only one hand.

Crocodile pegs – the larger handle on these pegs means that you can use your whole hand rather than just your fingertips to push the pegs on.



- Double Ended Pegs

This style of peg is open at both ends and is therefore always the right way up. It is ultra violet (UV) resistant to sun and weathering. The peg is long enough to be held in the fist so pegging can be done with a gross stabbing motion.

Visit the Independent Living Centre: Housekeeping accessories for suppliers. ilcaustralia.org.au/products



- Peg Baskets

Hook a peg basket onto the laundry trolley, clothes horse or clothes line. Make sure it is at a height so you do not need to bend or reach.



- Pegless Clothesline

A pegless clothesline is now available. It consists of sections that can be clipped together to customise the length. The line is made from polypropylene. Clothes are slid into position. It can be extended by adding extra sections available from the supplier. This clothesline can be added to a rotary clothesline or other clothesline frames, verandahs, laundry or camping.

Can be used with one hand. Visit the Independent Living Centre: Housekeeping accessories for suppliers ilcaustralia.org.au/products



The Laundry (continued)

- Front Loading Machines

Consider a front loading washing machine and dryer. Less personal energy is required to get the wet washing out of the machine.

If you have a bad back, bending over to transfer laundry from the bottom up to the dryer (if it is stacked on top) can be physically demanding. Top load washers allow you to load laundry at waist height, saving repetitive joint stress every time you load the machine.

Front load washing machines are built for efficiency. They can use one-third the amount of water, energy and detergent when compared with top loaders. So while the initial investment is higher, the efficiency of this washer will save money every month on energy and water.

Before buying compare cost and features of washing machines including your personal needs and preferences.



- Washing Machine or Dryer Stand

If bending is difficult or causes pain put the washing machine and dryer on a stand. This will raise the height of the machines and minimise bending.

For washing machine and dryer stands check with hardware and white good stores. Ensure that the stand is suitable, safe and strong enough for your washing machine or dryer.

Visit Independent Living Centre: ilcaustralia.org.au/products

- Clothes Horse

A clothes horse can be used inside and out.

Perfect when the weather is either hot or cold.

It also avoids having to carry washing outside and there is a lot less reaching with a clothes horse than there would be using a clothes line.

When purchasing a clothes horse or stand ensure it is easy to erect and is stable. It must not collapse with a bit of wind or a small bump.

There are a many styles and types available.

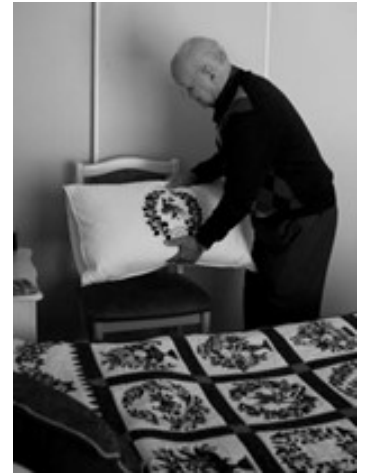
Consider sand bag weights to ensure stability when using the clothes horse outside.



5. The Bedroom

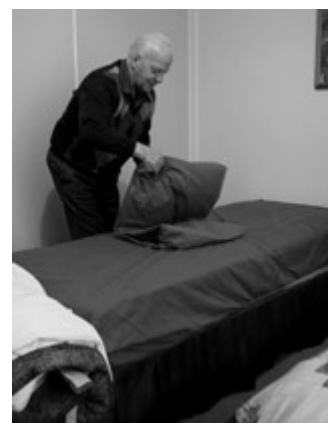
Making the Bed

- Consider positioning the bed away from the wall so one side of the bed can be made and then the other. This may take a little longer than leaning across the bed but it avoids back strain and wasting energy.
- A higher bed also means the bed may be easier to make.
- Place pillows on a stool or bedside table to avoid bending over to pick them up from the floor.
- Consider using a continental quilt or doona that is lighter making it easier to make than a top sheet and blankets. Easy access, zipped quilts are also available from certain major retailers.
- Use a fitted sheet to eliminate the need for tucking. However, take in to account that you may need considerable strength to pull it over the edge of the mattress.
- Avoid lifting the mattress, rather kneel beside the bed and slide your forearm underneath to tuck in the sheets or avoid tucking in non-fitted sheets altogether.



Changing Linen

- If a fitted and flat sheet is used under a quilt, the quilt cover doesn't need to be changed as often.
- When stripping the bed, roll the blankets onto a chair at the end of the bed to eliminate lifting. Remove soiled sheets for cleaning. The blankets can then be rolled back when the clean sheets are on.
- Fold sheets after laundering so that they can be unfolded from the centre of the bed eliminating the need for shaking and draping over the bed.



YouTube links for changing your duvet/continental quilt cover

www.youtube.com/watch?v=DRPfudNNd8Y

www.youtube.com/watch?v=mX8e0cUBpal

www.youtube.com/watch?v=6njTJ_Z_zko

The Bedroom (continued)

Items to assist around the Bedroom

- Homecraft Bed Ladder

A bed ladder is made from nylon rope with four white rigid plastic rungs. The bottom ends of the rope ties around the bed legs, and the plastic ladder rungs enable the user to pull themselves up with a hand over hand movement.

Visit the Independent Living Centre at :

ilcaustralia.org.au/products



- Quick Zip Sheets

Have you ever tried to make a bed that sits up against a wall and tried to get the fitted sheet under the mattress? Quick Zip Sheets could be the answer if you own a bed where the mattress sits within the bedframe - your fingers' worst enemy and your back's arch nemesis as you heave to lift the mattress and get a fitted sheet underneath!

These sheets consist of a fitted base that goes over your mattress as normal. Simply pop it onto your mattress and leave it there - and a Zip-On sheet that zips onto that base, and off again for washing. Easy!



To view the product visit: quickzipsheet.com and buymythings.com.au/products

- Night Lights

The solution may be a small portable light source. An easy to install 'stick on' or simply use as a portable light source. No tools required and adheres to any surface and stays cool to the touch. Lights cost around \$5.00 and are available from discount stores or hardware stores.



6. The Bathroom

Shower

- To reduce the amount of soap scum, use shower gel rather than soap you will not need to clean the shower as regularly or as vigorously.
- Dispensing Shampoo and Conditioner

Extracting shampoo or conditioner from hard plastic bottles can be difficult for those with minimum strength in their hands.

The solution is to place the required amount of shampoo or conditioner directly into soft plastic sauce or condiment bottles and top with water. Dilution rate will depend on your personal preference.



Soft plastic condiment or squeezy sauce bottles can be purchased at discount stores for around \$3.00 for a 250ml bottle or \$4.00 for a 500ml bottle (February 2018). This bottle has a cap to avoid spillage. Make sure the plastic is soft and pliable.

- Con-Serv Safe-Assist Tiltlock Folding Grab Rail

The Tiltlock is a wall mounted double arm folding grab rail that automatically locks when folded down to the horizontal position and locks vertically out of the way when not required. It is designed to be positioned on either or both sides of a toilet to assist with transfers. It is available in one size and four finishes. An optional toilet roll holder and nurse call mount block is available (nurse call switch is not included).

Visit Independent Living Centre SA - they have 137 different rails on their website:

ilcaustralia.org.au/products



The Bathroom (continued)

Toileting

- Bidets

Bidet units replace a conventional toilet seat. They fit most standard toilets and can be installed onto a specific toilet frame.

They provide adjustable temperature, pressure and range for the cleansing spray jet, adjustable warm air drying and seat temperature.

Visit Plumbing Supply Stores or the Independent Living Centre ilcaustralia.org.au/products



- Personal Hygiene Long Reach Comfort Wiper

The extra-long Comfort Wiper is the answer for your personal hygiene. The ergonomic shape of the Comfort Wiper helps you if you have limited dexterity.

The soft flexible head grips toilet paper securely while its design reaches where you cannot. This toilet aid contains a unique release button for fast, sanitary disposal.

Visit: aidsfordailyliving.com.au/product



7. Personal Care

Dressing

General Principles

- Gathering all items first to save energy and time.
- Sit to dress in a chair to reduce bending and balancing. Try not to balance on one leg.
- Loose fitting clothing is easier to put on and take off.
- Ensure your clothing is not too long and does not touch the ground to avoid tripping (e.g. dressing gown, nightie).

Techniques to make dressing easier and safer

- If vision is limited it may be helpful to store your clothing in coordination of colour and compatibility of style or clothing type.
- It may be helpful to dress in front of a mirror to see what you are doing.
- It is easier to put your weak arm or leg in clothing first when dressing. Take the strong arm or leg out first when undressing.
- To put on socks sit down and place your foot on a low stool, or cross your legs so that the calf of one leg is resting on the knee of the other leg. This action is not recommended if you've had a hip replacement or have hip problems.

Aids and assistive clothing to help with dressing

A long handled shoehorn may help with putting on and pulling off shoes and eliminate the need to bend down. The hook on the top of the shoehorn can also be used to pull up clothing.

- To assist with tying shoelaces you can use elastic shoe laces or change to slip on shoes or those that fasten with Velcro.
- To ease reaching to put your socks on consider a sock aid. It may help with putting on your socks.
- Putting stockings on may be easier with a stocking aid.
- Skirts and trousers with elastic waistbands can be easier to manage than those with fasteners.
- Clothing without fasteners, for example T-shirts, eliminate the need to do up buttons or zips.









Personal Care (continued)

Dressing (continued)

- A bra without fastenings or a bra with a front opening may be easier to put on than a bra that fastens at the back. Another option is to wear a tight singlet instead of a bra.
- To assist using zips attach either a large ring, a piece of cord, a paperclip or tape to your zipper. Another option is to replace your zipper with a Velcro fastening.
- A dressing stick can reduce the struggle of bending and reaching and assist with pulling and pushing your clothing. The hook on the end of the stick can be used to take off socks and shoes and it can also help reach zip rings.
- To maintain the appearance of a buttoned up shirt, buttons can be sewn on top of the sewn up button holes and then Velcro used underneath to fasten your shirt.
- A pick-up stick can be used to provide extended reach and assist with picking up clothing items from the floor without bending. Underpants and trousers can be put on with a pick-up stick or dressing stick.

Equipment available for making dressing easier

		
Sock Aid	Dressing Stick	Pick-Up Stick
		
Long Handled Shoehorn	Button Hook	Stocking Aid

Personal Care (continued)

Dressing (continued)

Putting Shoes On:

- The solution could be to use a long handled shoehorn that can be purchased from IKEA. Length 60cm, Width 5cm, Depth 5 cm. Visit: [ikea.com/au](https://www.ikea.com/au)



- Homecraft Metal Shoehorn

A long, white, epoxy coated steel shoehorn that is able to be used one handed. The PVC handgrip is hook-shaped for hanging and is available in one size only.

Visit: ilcaustralia.org.au/products



- Boot Remover

The picture below is an example of a wooden boot remover made for a client by TAD SA. Metal Boot Jacks are available at most retail saddleries.



- Elastic Shoe Laces

These shoelaces are made of elastic. They have crimped ends to help prevent fraying. Elastic shoelaces can help convert a tie-up shoe to a slip on shoe for users who have difficulty reaching or tying laces. Available in a variety of lengths and colours.

Visit: ilcaustralia.org.au/products



- Snap Laces

A shoe laces system, whereby once the system is set up, the user does not have to tie or untie the laces. The users 'clips' the laces together once their foot is in the shoe and 'unclips' the laces to remove their foot. This may be easier than needing to tie and untie shoe laces for people who have issues with finger dexterity or coordination.

Visit: ilcaustralia.org.au/products



Personal Care (continued)

Dressing (continued)

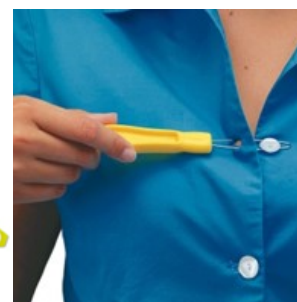
- Bracelet Buddy

Your bracelet buddy fastener holds one end of your bracelet or watch securely with a small and easy to use peg, leaving your other hand free to fasten. Fits all wrist sizes, left or right hand use.



- Button Hook

Fasten buttons without effort or with one hand using a button hook. Simply slide the button hook through the button hole, hook the button with the wire loop and pull the button through the hole. 15cm long.



- Button Hook / Zipper Pull Combo

A built-up wooden handle with a formed wire buttoning aid at one end and a hook at the other end for pulling zippers.

Visit: ilcaustralia.org.au/products



- Clip and Pull Dressing Strap



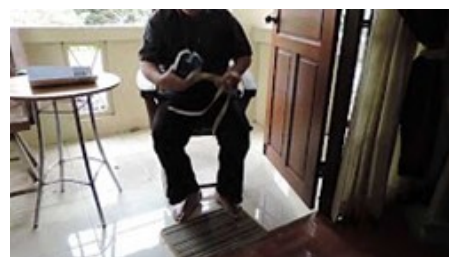
A dressing aid which reduces the need to bend. Made of clips and a strap to allow the user to pull up pants when dressing. Can be used with one hand.

Visit: ilcaustralia.org.au/products

Tip: You can make your own Pant Puller Upper with lengths of ribbons or cord and a couple of strong safety pins.

Make your own sock aid to help you get on your socks. All you need is a magazine.

To find out how visit: youtube.com



Check out Independent Living Centre for supplies of the above and similar.

There are also many examples of home made tools.

Personal Care (continued)

Eating

Utensils to make eating easier

- Cutlery with built up handles makes it easier to hold and grip.
- Angled cutlery can improve your ability bring food to your mouth.
- Use weighted cutlery to improve coordination if you experience hand tremors.
- Use a rocker knife to cut food with one hand while keeping food steady at the same time.
- For one handed eating, a fork with a knife edge may be suitable.
- Use plastic coated cutlery to reduce the risk of damaging your teeth if hand movement is uncoordinated.
- If you can not grasp handles, try a universal cuff that fits around the palm of the hand with a pocket to hold a utensil in place.



Other small equipment to help with eating

- A two handled cup or mug allows two handed grip to hold the cup or mug steady when drinking liquids.
- Use a plate guard to contain food on the plate when eating. This also provides an edge to push against when picking up food with cutlery using one hand.
- Plates with rims, raised lips, deep sections or channels can assist you when using one hand to eat.
- Use foam cups with plastic lids such as those used for take-way drinks to decrease spills.
- A portable tray, stable table or an over-the-bed mobile table provides a surface so that you can eat away from the kitchen table.
- A trolley or tray-mobile can be useful for moving your food from the kitchen bench to the dining table.
- Insulated mugs and plates can be used for drinks and food if your hands are sensitive to hot or cold temperatures.
- Sipping drinks through a paper straw, spout or non-spill feeder cup reduces spills when drinking liquid.



Daily eating routine

- Plan to eat regularly during the day.
- Cook with frozen pre-cut vegetables to remove the need to cut when eating.
- Eating finger foods may be easier as it reduces the need to hold cutlery.

Personal Care (continued)

Eating (continued)

Table set-up for easy feeding yourself

- Place a non-slip placemat or damp towel on the table to assist with keeping your plate in place when eating.
- Raise your table to a height that allows you to rest your arm on the table when bringing food to your mouth. Refer to TAD SA for assistance.
- Arrange your dining area so that the items most often used are within reaching distance.

Visit: ilcaustralia.org.au and search for Assistive Technology In the Home



Built Up Handles



Angled Cutlery



Weighted Cutlery



Plastic Coated Cutlery



Rocker Knife



Plate With Rim



Universal Cuff



Two Handled Cup



Plate Guard



Non-Slip Placemat



Traymobile



Insulated Mug

Personal Care (continued)

Footcare

General Principles:

- If you have any problems with your feet you should speak to your service provider to refer you to a podiatrist.
- Sit to care for your feet to save energy and increase safety.

Making Foot Care Easier

- A long handled sponge can be used to wash your feet or a wet toe wiper can be used when washing between your toes.
- Feet should be dried thoroughly following bathing or showering, especially in between the toes. You can use a dry toe wiper to make this task easier.
- Check feet regularly paying attention to dry skin, foot colour and temperature. A long handled mirror can assist you with this task.
- You should apply a moisturising cream for dry skin (but not between the toes) and put sunblock on your feet when you are out in the sun. A long handled lotion applicator can be used to minimise bending.
- A foot washer/scrubber designed to clean the entire foot without any bending or stretching. It is a plastic sandal with synthetic (nylon) bristles and suction cups that attach it to the floor when pressure is applied with the foot. It is available in one size and three colours from the Independent Living Centre.



Clipping Toenails

- Cut your toenails after a shower when nails are softer.
- Use long handled toenail scissors to assist you with cutting toenails. Ensure you have good vision for this task.
- Use a long handled toenail file instead of cutting toenails.
- Regularly visit your podiatrist for an easy, quick and safe way to maintain your feet.



Footwear

- Walking should be done in footwear rather than with bare feet to avoid injury and infection. Use 100% cotton or wool socks when wearing shoes.
- Footwear should be fitted well, have non-slip soles and be replaced when worn out. Thongs and slippers should be avoided.
- Shoes should be bought later in the day when your feet are at their largest due to swelling.

Personal Care (continued)

Grooming

General Principles:

- Sit to perform grooming tasks to save energy and increase safety.
- Keep regularly used items together.

Doing your hair

- Use a hairdryer stand, a wall mounted arm or a wall mounted dryer to remove the need to hold the hairdryer by hand.
- Place elbows on a table to hold your hairdryer to save energy or leave your hair to dry naturally.
- The handle of your hairdryer, curling iron, hairbrush or comb can be built up with foam to make it easier to grasp and hold.
- You can use an angled or long handled hairbrush or a comb to ease reaching to brush your hair.
- A universal cuff can fit around the palm and has a handle pocket to hold your hairbrush or comb to help with gripping.
- An aerosol can adapter can reduce the force required to use your hairspray.



Shaving

- Use an extension razor holder for either an electric or a disposable razor to help reach your legs.
- Use an electric razor as it may be easier to hold in your hand.

Make-up

- Mirrors with magnified lenses, lights and flexible handles can be used if you experience decreased vision or cannot view hard-to-see places.
- Use glasses with flip up or down lenses to apply makeup.
- Use larger lipstick or mascara tubes that are easier to hold than smaller tubes.
- Extension handles are available to help apply eye makeup and tweeze eyebrows.
- Use a cream that contains moisturiser, sunblock and foundation such as a BB cream to reduce the need to apply each separately.



Personal Care (continued)

Grooming (continued)

Other grooming hints

- A long handled lotion applicator can be used to apply body lotion and reduce the need to bend and reach.
- Weighted cuffs on the wrists can help increase your ability to perform grooming tasks if you experience hand tremors.
- Use nail clippers attached to suction cups to remove the need to hold nail clippers.
- A simple hairstyle that is easier to manage can save you both time and energy.
- Use a hairnet at night to avoid hair becoming knotted.

Equipment to make grooming easier



Long Handled
Lotion Applicator



Built Up Foam



Long Handled Hairbrush



Universal Cuff



Extension Razor Holder

Personal Care (continued)

Medication Use

Help to manage medications

- A medication dosage packet and box can assist with organising and managing medication. Some types have a reminder alarm that sounds during the day.
- A Webster pack contains small blister sections holding tablets for one week. The tablets are separated into dosages under columns relating to days and times of the day. A pharmacist can refill them for a small fee.
- A pill bob can assist with taking tablets out from blister packs.
- Use a pill splitter and a pill crusher help to split tablets for half-dosages or crushing tablets into powder form.

Other medication use tips

- A plastic eye drop dispenser is available to hold your eye open when putting in eye drops.
- It can be helpful to wear a medical alert bracelet or necklace if you have a medical condition that should be known immediately in an emergency.
- In some cases your medication can be delivered to your home. Speak to your regular pharmacist.
- Plan a routine to assist with helping to take medication regularly.
- There are organisations that can assist with medication management. Speak to your service coordinator for more information.
- Regularly review medications with your doctor (ie; monthly) or when medications change. Ask your doctor to print a current medication list for use at other appointments.



Personal Care (continued)

Medication Use (continued)

Equipment to assist with medication



Pill Splitter



Webster Pac
With Pill Bob



Pill Crusher



Eye Drop Dispenser



Medication Dosage
Packet

Personal Care (continued)

Oral Care

General Principles

- Sitting to clean your teeth is safer and saves energy. A bowl of water at the kitchen table may be an option if you do not have a chair in the bathroom.

Cleaning Your Teeth

- An electric or battery operated toothbrush can make teeth cleaning easier and reduces repetitive brushing movements.
- A built up toothbrush grip or a large foam handle can be attached to your toothbrush to assist with grip.
- A squeezing device can be attached to your toothpaste tube to help push out the paste.
- A toothpaste dispenser can be attached to the wall to make it easier to squeeze out toothpaste.
- A tooth floss holder can assist you to grip tooth floss. This device enables one handed flossing.

Cleaning Dentures

- You can use a suction cup denture brush to aid cleaning dentures with one hand.
- Denture cleaning tablets can also be used.



Oral Care Tips

- Toothbrushes should be replaced when frayed (approximately every three months).
- Dentures may need refitting as weight changes occur. Poor fitting dentures may lead to oral health problems.
- Visit your dentist regularly. You may need to speak with your dentist for further advice.

Personal Care (continued)

Oral Care (continued)

Oral Care Tools



Tooth Floss Holder



Large Foam Handle



Built Up
Toothbrush Grip



Toothpaste
Dispenser



Toothpaste
Squeezing Device



Suction Cup
Denture Brush

Personal Care (continued)

Showering

General Principles

- A correctly installed rail is essential for safe showering.
- Avoid rushing when showering.
- You may not want to shower everyday if you don't have to.
- If balance is poor, sit on a recommended shower chair to wash.
- Plan ahead by collecting toiletry items and clean clothing before you have a shower. Prepare shower, bathroom and equipment before undressing.
- Plan to use the toilet before showering.

Bathroom safety

- Ensure there is bright lighting in your bathroom before showering.
- Warm bathroom with a heater before showering then turn off.
- Remove electrical appliances from near shower or bath before turning on water.
- If you have an electric exhaust fan turn it on before you shower.
- A non-slip safety treatment or adhesive strips can be applied to the shower or bath floor surfaces.
- Slip resistant suction non-slip mats can be placed on the shower floor to reduce the risk of slipping if floors have not been treated.
- Ensure floors are kept as dry as possible.
- Turn on cold water first then add hot water to prevent scalding skin.
- Talcum powder should not be used in the bathroom because it can be slippery on bathroom tiles.
- Leave items dropped on the floor to be picked up when bathroom area is dry.

Personal Care (continued)

Showering (continued)

Bathroom Changes for Showering

- Grab rails on the shower walls or on the wall next to your bath may help provide increased stability and ease getting in and out. Ask your occupational therapist to position grab rails correctly.
- Use a hand-held shower hose to direct water where required while sitting or standing. Hoses also come with hooks for regular shower use. Ask your service coordinator for safety instruction guidelines.
- Tap turners reduce the effort needed to turn taps. These fit over the existing tap head to create a lever. Lever taps are another option.
- Keep a caddy in the shower to allow easy access to items. A caddy should be at waist height to decrease bending.

Showering tips

- Sit on a shower chair or stool while washing your body to increase stability when showering or if you find it difficult to reach your lower body.
- If your shower is over the bath, a bath board or bench that sits across the bath may be appropriate. This eliminates the need to step over the side of the bath.
- If bathing is preferred a height adjustable electric bath seat is available.
- A soap mitten, soap-on-a-rope or soap in an old stocking decreases the risk of dropping slippery soap while showering. These can be tied to a grab rail or shower hose.
- Use shower gel as an alternative to bar soap. This will reduce the amount of soap scum in the shower and reduce the need to pick up soap if it slips out of your hands.
- A long handled sponge makes it easier to reach and wash your back and legs.
- Use a long handled hair washing aid to assist with lathering shampoo or conditioner to prevent the need to reach.
- A long handled toe wiper can be used to wash or dry between toes, eliminating bending.
- Use a towelling bathrobe or towelling slippers for drying to reduce arm movement, saving energy.
- Place a towel or mat on the floor to assist drying your feet.



Personal Care (continued)

Showering (continued)

Personal Hygiene without Showering

- Sponge bathing may be an alternative to showering every day.
- Use disposable body wipes to clean your body in between showering or bathing.
- Dry shampoo can extend the time between hair washes. Talcum powder can also be rubbed through the hair roots to take away oily appearance.

Showering Tools



Grab Rails



Hand Held Shower Hose



Shower Chair



Shower Stool



Bathboard



Soap Mit



Long Handled Sponge



Long Handled Washing Aid



Long Handled Toe Wiper

Personal Care (continued)

Sleeping

Sleep Tips

- Select a regular time to go to bed.
- Plan for a comfortable bed.
- Avoid drinking caffeine (tea or coffee) after lunch time.
- Listen to quiet music to relax before going to sleep.



Getting Out of Bed Easier

- Use bed blocks to raise your bed height to ease getting on and off the bed.
- Check that the mattress has firm side supports to ensure that it does not dip down when sitting on the edge of the bed. A new mattress may be required if your mattress is over ten years old.
- A bed ladder allows you to sit up from a lying position by pulling up on each rung.
- Place satin sheets on your mattress or wear satin pyjamas (but not both) to provide a slippery surface for moving in your bed.

Making Sleeping Easier and Safer

- Use a touch lamp or nightlight to provide light if you need to get up during the night without having to turn on a switch.
- Place sheep skin on top of your mattress to reduce the risk of pressure sores.
- Place a commode chair near the bed for easy and quick access to reduce sleep disturbances for continence management.
- Take wheels off bed legs to avoid having your bed roll away.
- A phone next to your bed is useful in case of an emergency.
- A vibrating or flashing alarm is available for your smoke detector if you have low hearing.

Personal Care (continued)

Sleeping (continued)

Sleeping Tools



Bed Blocks



Bed Ladder



Bed Stick



Sheep Skin



Commode Chair

An in-home occupational therapy assessment is highly recommended for house-hold and personal aids.

Personal Care (continued)

Toileting

Improve your ability to sit and stand at the toilet

- Use a toilet seat raiser to help get on and off the toilet. Toilet seat raisers can add eight to sixteen centimetres to the height of your toilet.
- Use a toilet surround to help sit and rising from the toilet. There are different types that can be attached to your toilet, floor or commode.
- Put grab rails in your bathroom to hold onto when sitting and rising from the toilet. Your occupational therapist can assist to position grab rails correctly.



Daily Toileting Routine

- Wear clothes that are easier to get on and off such as pants with elastic waistbands or pants with suspenders.
- Wrap toilet paper around one hand to wipe instead of grasping it.
- Use a pump hand soap dispenser to make using soap easier. This can be wall mounted for one handed use.
- Use hand sanitizer to cleanse hands (of germs not dirt) following toilet use if access to a sink is difficult.
- Consider a wall mounted hand dryer to dry hands if using a towel is difficult.

Small Equipment To Assist With Toileting

- Use a dressing stick or pick up stick to assist in reaching pants after toileting. A dressing stick has a hook to pull clothing.
- Use a toilet paper dispenser with no-rip sheets to remove the need to tear off pieces of toilet paper from a roll.
- Have toilet paper within easy reach from the toilet by using a freestanding toilet paper holder.
- A bottom wiper can help you with gripping toilet paper and reaching to wipe after toileting. Different types of wipers are available depending on your needs (such as long handled or foldable).
- Tap turners reduce the effort needed to turn taps. These fit over the existing tap head to create a lever. Flick mixer lever taps or electronic sensor taps (sensitive to movement) are other options.



Personal Care (continued)

Toileting (continued)

Night Toileting

- Ensure you have a well-lit path to the toilet. Use plug-in nightlights or touch lamps in the bedroom, hallway and bathroom to provide lighting.
- Place a commode chair near the bed for easy and quick access to reduce the need to walk to the bathroom to use the toilet. Use commodes regularly at night or only in urgency.
- Use a urinal bottle (available for both men and women) while seated on the edge of your bed. Bedpans can also be used if you are unable to rise from the bed.

Incontinence Management

- Plan regular visits to the toilet throughout the day.
- Look for a pattern of when toileting accidents occur and record these in a diary. Once identified you can manage these scenarios more easily.
- Wear a protective pad at night in case incontinence occurs. Protective waterproof bed sheets are also available.
- It may be helpful to talk to a continence nurse for advice. Speak to your service coordinator for more information.

Toileting Equipment

		
Toilet Seat Raiser	Bottom Wiper	Toilet Surround
		
Commode Chair	Male/Female Urinal Bottle	Tap Turners
		
Free-Standing Toilet Paper Holder	Wall Mounted Grab Rails	Dressing Stick

Personal Care (continued)

Handcare

- Nail Clippers with magnifier

Assists in making trimming and cutting of nails easier and safer. Has a non-slip base for stability. Can be operated by finger, palm or wrist. Visit: ilcaustralia.org.au/products



- Magnifying Clippers

Clever in design these nail clippers feature an adjustable 2x magnifier, that let's you see up close and clearer. With a wide grip plastic cover they're easier to control than regular clippers. Handy for those with arthritis and a must for those with poor eyesight.

Check out your local Pharmacy or Discount stores or Visit: aidsfordailyliving.com.au/product



- Removing Cards from your purse or wallet

Use a pair of tweezers or eyebrow pluckers, depending on your personal requirements. Tweezers are readily available from supermarkets, discount stores and pharmacies.

- Key Turner

These enlarged key toppers are designed to triple the leverage, allowing a person to open hard to turn locks with less effort. The Enablers EZ Key Turners are T-shaped holders that fit over the top of a standard key. EZ Key Turners are available in different colours. Two different coloured key turners are included in each package.



- Soft rubber cover for round door knobs or tap handles

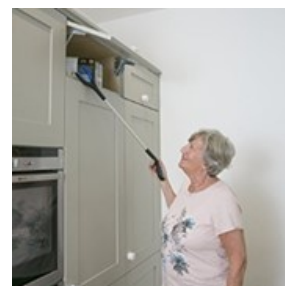
A soft rubber type (latex free) cover that stretches to fit over round door knobs or tap handles. It provides a soft slip resistant surface, making turning easier. The grip has parallel ridges on the outside plus a small projection on one side to provide some additional leverage. Available in various colours or luminous (glow in the dark) for easier vision when dark. Visit: ilcaustralia.org.au/products



Personal Care (continued)

Grab Stick

- A “reacher” or “grab stick” helps to reach items on the floor, high up or in awkward places. Available from the Independent Living Centre or Larger Discount stores and Disposal stores.
- Be clear about what features you need. Think about the weight the tool needs to be able to lift. If you need one to carry in your handbag you may want to consider a telescopic style. Do you need one with suction caps or magnets?
- Costs vary considerably from around \$7 up to \$30. There seems to be very little discernible difference between the different price point items so don't spend more than you need to.
- Test out the grab stick in the store if possible, if it is packaged ask the retailer to open the packaging for you.



Basic Swivel seat Cushion



- A swivel cushion designed for a car, home or office chair to assist with turning your body once seated. It has a solid, plastic seat base and padded, upholstered grey top. The cover is removable. It is not suitable for narrow bucket seats so it is important to measure the vehicle seat.
- Available from the Independent Living Centre.
Transfer Aids: ilcaustralia.org.au/products

Swivel Seat



- Rotating Swivel Cushion to swing your legs in or out of any chair. Place on any chair; dining, lounge or use in the car so that you can turn and rise easily. It is ideal if you have had hip/knee replacements and have limited mobility. Swivels a full 360°. 39cm round.
- Available from Aids for Daily living
aidsfordailyliving.com.au/product

8. Home Maintenance

Gutter Cleaning

- Gutter blockages are primarily due to fallen leaves from nearby trees, so the frequency that your gutters need cleaning will depend on the size, type and number of trees on your property.
- Gutters may need cleaning up to four times per year if there are a lot of trees near your house, or your gutters may only need cleaning twice per year if there are only a few trees nearby.
- Your gutters should be cleaned to extend their life.
- A good time to have your gutters cleaned is in Autumn when the nearby trees have finished shedding their leaves.
- The safest way to ensure that your gutters are properly maintained is to engage professional gutter cleaning services. This will cost more than doing it yourself but it is a lot less than paying to repair water damage or replacing the guttering.
- You may like to consider having a mesh screen installed (photo right). To reduce the amount of leaf litter. You can also blow the leaves off the mesh or out of the gutter using a blower with an extension (picture below left).
- To remove any debris left in the gutter use a high pressure extension hose (picture below right).



Your safety

Be aware, falls (from ladders or the roof) can cause serious injury, permanent incapacity and even death. Think of your safety when considering gutter cleaning.

9. The Garden

Benefits of gardening

- Is an enjoyable form of exercise
- Increases levels of physical activity and helps mobility and flexibility
- Encourages use of all motor skills
- Improves endurance and strength
- Helps prevent diseases like osteoporosis
- Reduces stress levels and promotes relaxation
- Provides stimulation and interest in nature and the outdoors
- Improves wellbeing as a result of social interaction
- Can provide nutritious, home-grown produce.

Things to remember

- Gardening is a healthy, stimulating physical activity that can be enjoyed by older people.
- The garden, equipment and tools can all be modified to suit the needs of older people.
- Gardening increases physical activity and maintains mobility and flexibility.

Adjustments to equipment and the garden for older people

Garden spaces, tools and equipment can be modified or adapted to help reduce the physical stress associated with gardening. Suggestions include:

- Using vertical planting to make garden beds accessible for planting and harvesting – try using wall and trellis spaces
- Raising beds to enable people with physical restrictions to avoid bending and stooping
- Using retractable hanging baskets, wheelbarrows and containers on castors for movable and elevated garden beds
- Finding adaptive tools and equipment – these are available from some hardware shops
- Using foam, tape and plastic tubing to modify existing tools for a better grip
- Using lightweight tools that are easier to handle
- Providing shade areas for gardening in summer months
- Having stable chairs and tables to use for comfortable gardening
- Making sure that there is a tap nearby or consider installing a drip feeder system for easy watering
- Replace high maintenance plants/shrubs/trees in the garden with low maintenance alternatives.

Reference: [Better Health - Gardening for Older People](#)

The Garden (continued)

General

- Avoid gardening in the hottest or coldest part of the day as this uses more energy.
- Use lightweight, long-handled tools that do not require much energy to use.

Weeding

- Weed a little bit and often so the job doesn't get too big.
- Avoid unnecessary bending to remove weeds, use a simple hoe or hook end on a long pole. An easy step down and pull back movement will remove weeds.
- When shopping try the tool and see how easy or difficult it is to use.



Planting

- Work at a bench or garden table so pots can be planted at an easy to reach height while seated.
- Use a rolling cart with larger wheels to transport pots from one area of the garden to another.



Mowing the lawns

- Use a lightweight or electric lawnmower.
- Leave the catcher off the lawnmower to reduce the amount of work and let the clippings mulch the lawn.

Heavy gardening power tools

- Consider lightweight battery powered tools combining both power and ergonomics.

Do you have difficulty bending your knees and getting up and down?

- A folding garden seat may allow you to either sit or kneel comfortably while you work.
- Make sure that the height is adjustable and can be easily changed to your requirements.



The Garden (continued)

Do you have difficulty moving bags of soil or fertilizer? Consider the following:

- Use a small tarp to transport heavy items such as bags of mulch, plant divisions or balled-and-burn lapped trees and shrubs. Even if you have a wheelbarrow this ground level transportation system may be easier on your back for many chores.
- Avoid the common issue of dirt spills by using a two-wheel wheelbarrow or consider a garden cart.
- Visit hardware stores for manual or electric wheelbarrows.



Tap Turner

- The Easy Tap Turner attaches to a standard tap head, creating a longer handle for greater leverage. The handle pivots to allow for taps installed close to the wall. Made of heavy duty plastic.



- For more information visit:

Independent Living Centre Gardening: ilcaustralia.org.au/products

Hoselink: hoselink.com.au

Check out Arthritis Solutions for other tap turners: arthritisolutions.com.au

10 . Shopping

General

Plan Ahead

- Plan ahead by making a shopping list before you leave home - this prevents long periods of standing and walking.
- Keep a list of items nearly finished / required in an easily accessible and prominent place with a pencil nearby. Plan meals ahead.
"I buy long life milk in larger amounts because it saves me making unnecessary trips to the supermarket." Consumer.
- Consider using the supermarket's order and delivery service or internet delivery service.
- Arrange with your bank to have regular automatic payments (direct debit) for your ongoing accounts so you have fewer errands to do when shopping.
- Plan joint shopping trips with your neighbours or relatives.
- If you can, it may be easier to do shopping several times a week so only small amounts have to be carried and lifted. Also consider doing clothes or gift shopping on a different day to groceries.
- Choose your time to shop. Shopping out of peak hour means the time (and energy) required will be less as it will not be as busy. On your next trip to the supermarket ask at the service desk what is the best time to shop.
- Use the Yellow Pages and phone the shop first for details on availability of items and/or prices - let your fingers do the walking rather than your feet.
- Discuss with your doctor whether you are eligible for a disabled parking permit or Access Cabs if your mobility is restricted.



Shopping (continued)

At the Shops

- Use a shopping bag on wheels. Those with four wheels are more stable and easier to manage than those with two.
- Supermarkets now have a selection of trolleys including those that can be used with wheelchairs. When choosing a supermarket trolley, ensure it runs properly. Also use the trolley to take goods to the car or use parcel pick-up. A laundry trolley may be used at home to carry goods from the car to your home.
- If you need to shop alone, seek help from staff or another shopper for heavier items or those located on high or low shelves.
- At the checkout, ask the operator to pack groceries into smaller loads as these are easier to transfer from the trolley to the car or bus. A shopping bag in each hand is better than one heavy bag.
- Ask the checkout operator to put all frozen foods together, provided they are not too heavy, so that they can be unpacked first. That way you can rest if tired, before finishing unpacking.
- Frozen foods may also be placed in a soft esky or cooler bag to keep the food frozen longer, and give you more time to get home and unpack without rushing. Choose these at the end of your shopping to stop them defrosting quickly.
- If shopping for clothes, take several different sizes of clothing into a change room to save time and energy or ask the shop assistant to pop in and check.
- Take a taxi home and ask the driver to deliver the items to the door (check before you get into the cab that they can assist).



Shopping (continued)

Online Shopping

Coles – Online information

coles.com.au

Woolworths – Online

woolworths.com.au

ALDI – No online shopping. In store only.

Foodland – Online

myfoodland.com.au

Drakes— Online

drakes.com.au

When shopping online check:

- what the charges are for delivery
- what conditions apply for free delivery
- if there is a difference between online and in store product prices
- if the store has both on-line ordering and delivery
- if the store has a pick up option.

Wheelchair carrier



Consider a purpose made tool, for example, a client wanted to tow his wheelchair behind his scooter so he could use it in shops. Technology for Ageing and Disability (SA) Inc (TAD SA) designed and built this tool.

11. Car

Washing the Car

- Consider taking the car to an automatic carwash or a 'do it yourself' carwash at a service station as it has all the equipment readily accessible and you will not waste energy and strain yourself transporting vacuum cleaners, hoses etc.
- Apply cleaner to hardened spots before going to the car wash.



Auto Assist Grab Bar

Sometimes it may be difficult to get in and out of the car.

Consider purchasing a grab bar. It is a handle that fits into striker/door-latch of the door well. Some have a flashlight to increase visibility at night.

Check out Mobility Services, but please remember to compare the grab bar with the products of other suppliers. mobilityservices.com.au



12. Caravanning and Camping

Problem Solving

After a challenging health issue Leonie thought she would not be able to go caravanning any more as she had mobility issues and needed an electric wheelchair to get around.

With a bit of research Leonie and her partner Michael found a small mobility unit that easily folded up and fitted into the space available in the rear of their 4WD. The unit was a Luggie Elite shown in the attached photos.

To get the unit into the 4WD, they purchased a 12 volt boat winch and securely mounted it on the rear of the 4WD roof rack and wired to a 12 volt outlet.

The winch with a sling gently lifted the unit from the ground to the right height to allow it to be pushed into the space and then disconnected from the winch.



The specifications of the winch are: Pulling capacity 2000lbs (970 kg) Max weight 2268 kg Line speed 1.8 m per minute under load. Cable Length 9.14m. Hood Size 20mm opening x 95mm length.

Power Supply 12 volts. Power Cord 1.8m length negative lead 4.5m length positive lead. Mounting Plate 222x125x254mm. Net weight 8.44kg.



Luggie Elite folded



All set for 15km @ 6km per hour

13. Entertainment and Social Connection

One of the key dimensions of Wellness is social connectivity. It is important for everyone to access and maintain connection to others through social activities.

One handed walker

Walkers only come with a left and right hand brake. Often stroke patients can only use one hand, which means they can only apply one brake which results in the walker turning in circles. One brake lever has been removed and an equaliser has been added so one lever works both brakes.



Art Easel

A budding one armed artist in the APY lands needed a device which she could raise, lower, tilt and rotate a canvas unaided, with the press of a button. It also had to fold away when not in use.



Engineer



Consumer

Playing Cards



Deluxe Easy Grip Card Disks and long plastic card holders.

Can be purchased online at bridgeshop.com.au

Before buying online check out the following link:

14. People with Sensory Impairment

Vision and Hearing

Royal Society for the Blind

Low Vision Centre (LVC) Knapman House 230 Pirie Street Adelaide Phone: 1300 944 306

Website: rsb.org.au/low-vision-centre

The Low Vision Centre provides a specialist vision assessment to assist to determine the most appropriate support to help you maintain your independence. In a friendly clinic setting a counsellor can have a chat about what is challenging for you and what you would like to achieve. An optometrist will assess your vision and prescribe suitable magnification aids that you can trial free of charge prior to deciding whether to purchase them. An ophthalmologist (SA only) will briefly examine you and answer any questions you may have about your vision.

A large range of daily living aids such as talking clocks and watches, liquid level finders and UV shields are also available for purchase. All products can be purchased without an appointment or online at the RSB shop. You will also have the opportunity to talk to staff and look at a variety of adaptive technology options. You may also be referred for other RSB services and support.

You are able to attend the clinic if your vision is stopping you from doing everyday tasks and can't be corrected with glasses, contact lenses, surgery or medical treatment. The RSB likes to have a recent eye report from your optometrist, ophthalmologist or GP to attend a clinic and RSB staff can help to arrange for this information to be forwarded.

There is no cost to attend the clinic and an interpreter and volunteer transport is available and can be arranged if needed

Vision Australia

(Based in Melbourne and Sydney but some services are available in SA)

An online shop is available for advice about buying and using appliances such as mobile phones, tablets, computers and household appliances. It also offers an audio book library.

Website: visionaustralia.org

Victor Reader Stream

The Victor Reader Stream is a hand-held digital media player specifically designed for the blind or visually impaired. It's sleek, lighter and smaller than the original stream, which makes it a great hand-held device that is easy to handle, or carry in a pocket or bag.

It serves as a great all-round audio book reader, music player and digital recorder in one! Listen to books, play music, or listen to many other media formats including DAISY.



It's also useful for making high-quality audio recordings of meetings or lectures using the in-built microphone feature. Audio recordings can be played back or listened to using the external speaker or using a pair of headphones.

By connecting to a computer or Wi-Fi, the Victor Reader Stream can play a wide range of media formats: MP3, MP4, EPUB plus more.

Available from: visionaustralia.org

People with Sensory Impairment (continued)

Penfriend Labeller 2

PenFriend helps you label everything you want in your own audio recorded voice. This labeler is easy to use and features high contrast yellow buttons on a black labeler.

Use with self-adhesive labels which can be scanned and when used with the PenFriend play back your audio voice recording. Can be used to identify a range of items - at home, school or work. visionaustralia.org/penfriend-2-labeler

Audio Book Search: visionaustralia.org

Audio Players



A very simple-to-use audio book player that fits in the palm of your hand. Can hold up to 30 audio books.

Visit: visionaustralia.org

Libraries of SA

Website: libraries.sa.gov.au

From any library anyone can borrow audio books if they have a CD/MP3 player

Orientation and Mobility Training

Guide Dogs Association

251 Morphett Street, Adelaide Phone: 08 203 8333

Website: guidedogs.org.au

Orientation and Mobility training (same as RSB). Both agencies provide general training as well as white cane training and guide dog training.

Hearing Loss

Deaf Can Do

Address: 59-61 Grange Road, Welland SA 5007 Phone: 08 8100 8200

Website: deafcando.com.au

Assists people who are hard of hearing as well as the deaf community.

15. Consumer Information

The Australian Consumer Law sets out consumer rights that are called consumer guarantees. These include your rights to a repair, replacement or refund as well as compensation for damages and loss and being able to cancel a faulty service.

For further information: accc.gov.au/consumers

View information on safe shopping on line for seniors:
moneysmart.gov.au/life-events-and-you

Independent Living Centre

The Independent Living Centre (ILC), including the Continence Resource Centre, provides professional and unbiased information and advice on assistive technology, equipment and techniques to help people improve their quality of life and maintain their independence.

The Independent Living Centre is staffed by health professionals. Our services are available to everyone including:

- People with disability, injury or illness
- Community Groups
- Organisations
- Carers
- Health Professionals
- Students

A staff member will answer your questions and provide guidance and information.

Address: Blacks Road, Gilles Plains SA 5086

Opening hours:

9.00 am to 5.00 pm, Monday to Friday (closed public holidays) for self-guided viewing.

Call during opening hours to make an **appointment** for times between 10.00 am and 4.00 pm, Monday to Friday, if you need staff to help you.

Enquiry line:

9.00 am to 4.00 pm, Monday to Friday (closed public holidays)

Phone: 1300 885 886 (SA/NT callers only) or 08 8266 5260

Email: ilcsa@sa.gov.au

Website: dhs.sa.gov.au/services/disability-services/independent-living-centre

Equipment catalogue:

Our equipment catalogue is available online by visiting the ILC Australia website:

ilcaustralia.org.au

TAD SA

Technology for Ageing and Disability (SA Inc is a volunteer based charity that designs and build equipment for people with disabilities and the aged. TAD SA are a not for profit organisation.

Telephone: 8261 2922

Website: tadsa.org.au

Aids for Daily Living

Telephone: 1300 311 568

aidsfordailyliving.com.au

Consumer Information cont'd

Home Energy Audits

Because your energy bill isn't itemised like a mobile phone bill or shopping receipt, it can be hard to tell how energy is used in your home. Doing a home energy audit can help you understand what the main energy users in your home are and help you find ways to reduce your energy use to keep your energy bills to a minimum.

Do a Home Energy Audit

sa.gov.au/topics/do-a-home-energy-audit

Home Energy Audit toolkit

What's in the toolkit?

sa.gov.au/topics/home-energy-toolkits

Where to get a toolkit?

For the public:

The Home Energy Toolkit is available from all metropolitan libraries and most regional libraries in South Australia. Contact your local library to check availability.

Please note: Toolkits are not available for sale to individuals.

Online Product Reviews

When relying on online product reviews for information about goods and services, consumers should be aware that not all posted reviews are legitimate.

Visit the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission

accc.gov.au

Some of the product review sites:

productreview.com.au

canstarblue.com.au

choice.com.au

nationalproductreview.com

Australian Competition and Consumer Commission



Australian
Competition &
Consumer
Commission

Northern Collaborative Project



Supported by the Australian Government Department of Health. Visit the [Department of Health website](#) for more information. Although support for this project has been provided by the Australian Government, the material herein does not necessarily represent the views or policies of the Australian Government.

relationships
people
collaboration
responsiveness
community
complexity
diversity
equity
flexible
needs
outcomes
negotiation
older
partnerships
services
respect
young
reforms
providers
supports