



Assistive Devices to Help Promote Independence

As you get older, you may start to have trouble with everyday tasks such as bathing, picking up things off the floor, or even just getting around. Assistive devices are products and tools that can make life easier. They might be new things you add to your home, or improvements to something you already have. The first step is recognizing when and where you could use some extra help. Sometimes people adapt to changes in their ability level, giving up things they like to do without even recognizing it. Here are some ideas that could help make your daily activities easier:

Getting Around:

- ✓ A cane or crutch used on the opposite side of a painful knee or hip makes walking easier.
- ✓ Reachers are long rods with a grip handle on one end and a grabber on the other. They let you pick up small objects without having to bend over or reach uncomfortably.
- ✓ Elevated chair legs make it easier to get in and out of your seat. The chairs you have can usually be fitted with extenders.

In the Kitchen & Bedroom:

- ✓ Rearrange your kitchen so that the things you use most often are easy to reach.
- ✓ Use lamps activated by touch or by your voice.
- ✓ Getting dressed could be easier if you switch to big buttons, button hooks, or velcro closures.
- ✓ A sock aid can help you pull up your socks without bending your legs. A zipper pull makes zippers easier to grab and zip.

In the Bathroom:

- ✓ A tub bench or shower seat lets you bathe more comfortably and reduces the chance of falls.
- ✓ Grab bars make it easier to get in and out of the bath and on and off the toilet.
- ✓ A raised toilet seat with side rails reduces the strain of getting on and off.
- ✓ Long-handled sponges help you to wash your legs and feet without bending.

Occupational Therapists specialize in helping older adults to safely perform activities and do the things they want to do. Being able to perform basic self-care activities is very important for older adults to safely live independently. They may have other ideas for assistive devices or home modifications that could make a world of difference. If you are having trouble with completing day-to-day activities, talk with your doctor about physical and occupational therapy to restore your mobility and function as soon as possible.