

ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL INTERVENTIONS

This is a listing of environmental problems by living areas with potential solutions. It can be used to assist in making living improvements to increase independence and personal safety.

1) BATHROOM

PROBLEM	POTENTIAL INTERVENTION
a. Getting on/off toilet	Raised seat: side safety bars: grab bars
b. Getting in/out of tub	Grab bars: bath stool/chair: transfer bench: hand held shower: rubber mat: hydraulic bath seat
c. Slippery on wet floors	Non-skid rugs or mats
d. Hot water burns	Turn down thermostat: anti-scald device
e. Doorway too narrow	Leave wheelchair at door and use walker: install off-set door hinge
f. Dizziness standing at sink	Sit on stool
g. Difficulty seeing	Adequate lighting: clear plastic shower curtain: Toilet seat cover or seat that contrasts with walls and floor: adjustable mirror magnifier

2) KITCHEN

PROBLEM	POTENTIAL INTERVENTION
a. Open flames & burners	Microwave, electric toaster oven: hot plates: crock pot: meals on wheels: frozen dinners: auto shut off
b. Access items	Install accessible wall outlets, switches: automatic fire extinguisher in range hood. Place commonly used items in easy to reach areas: adjustable height counters, cupboards, pull out drawers: lazy susans: wall storage rack: remove cabinet doors, reacher
c. Hard to turn on faucet/stove	Lever-style faucet: "T" turning handle
d. Carrying items	Slide across counter: use cart: walker basket or tray: bridge items surface to surface: eat at counter sitting on stool
e. Difficulty seeing	Adequate lighting: contrasting colored china, placemats, napkins: utensils with brightly colored handles: HiMarks

3) LIVING ROOM

PROBLEM	POTENTIAL INTERVENTION
a. Soft, low chair	Board under cushion: pillow or folded blanket to raise seat: blocks or platform under legs: automatic seat lift/chair: Good armrests to push up on, back and seat cushions (Obus Forme)
b. Swivel and rocking chairs	Block motion
c. Obstructing furniture	Relocate or remove to clear paths (especially glass top tables)
d. Extension cords	Run along walls: under sturdy furniture: eliminate unnecessary ones: use power strips with breakers if possible
e. Accessing and seeing light switches	Touch sensitive switches, voice activated light switches (X-10, Radio Shack): illuminated wall switches: avoid light switch plates and sockets that blend with wall paper or paint color

4) BEDROOM

PROBLEM	POTENTIAL INTERVENTION
a. Rolling beds	Remove wheels: block against wall
b. Bed too low	Leg extensions: blocks: second mattress: adjustable height hospital bed
c. Getting in/out bed	Portable bed rail
d. Lighting	Bedside light: night light: flashlight (attaches to walker or cane): remote controlled switches (X-10, Radio Shack) lamp switch extension lever, touch lamp, touch light extension control
e. Sliding rugs	Remove: tack down: rubber back: two sided tape (hardware store)
f. Slippery floor	Non-skid wax: no wax: rubber soled footwear
g. Thick rug edge/threshold	Metal strip at edge: stripe to mark change: remove threshold: tack or tape down edge
h. Far from bathroom	Mobility aid next to bed: bedside commode: urinal
i. Night-time calls	Bedside phone: cordless phone: intercom: buzzer, lifeline
j. Access clothes	Place clothes in easy to reach drawers, shelves, or hangers
k. Can't see clock	Large faced clock radio. Braille alarm clock, talking alarm clock

5) STEPS/STAIRS

PROBLEM	POTENTIAL INTERVENTION
a. Cannot negotiate	Stair glide: lift (Braun Corp), elevator, ramp (permanent, portable or removable): able to bump up/down stairs on rear end in emergencies
b. No handrails	Install at least one side (check stability)
c. Loose rugs	Remove or nail down to wooden steps
d. Difficult to see	Adequate lighting: mark edge of steps with bright colored tape (at least top & bottom ones)
e. Unable to use walker on stairs	Keep second walker or wheelchair at top or bottom of stairs

6) TELEPHONE

PROBLEM	POTENTIAL INTERVENTION
a. Difficult to reach	Cordless phone: inform friends to give you 10 rings: clear path: headset cordless phone: answering machine & call back: remote answer phone
b. Difficult to hear ringing	Ring amplifier: blinking lights, vibration (Silent Call, Inc.)
c. Difficult to hear other person	Volume control: TDD: headset
d. Difficult to hold receiver	Headset: speaker phone: adapted handles (AT&T Phone Center)
e. Difficulty dialing numbers	Preset memory-dial, large buttons and numbers: voice activated dialing

7) HOME MANAGEMENT

PROBLEM	POTENTIAL INTERVENTION
a. Laundry	Easy to access (basement, stairs, etc.) sit on stool to access clothes in dryer: good lighting: fold laundry sitting at table: carry laundry in bag on stairs; use cart
b. Mail	Easy to access mailbox: mail basket on door: ask carrier to place in a specific location (same with paperboy): install mail-slot, use reacher: key lever
c. Housekeeping	Long-handled sponge, dust pan: lightweight vacuum
d. Controlling thermostat	Mount in accessible location: large print numbers (available from gas company in some areas): remote controlled thermostat (X-10, Radio Shack)

8) MEDICATIONS

PROBLEM	POTENTIAL INTERVENTION
a. Difficulty reading label	Use magnifying glass: good lighting: large print
b. Memory loss	Medication organizer: automatic pill dispensers: organize in envelopes with time and date: houseclean all old medications
c. Difficult to open	Pill cap opener

9) LEISURE

PROBLEM	POTENTIAL INTERVENTION
a. Can't hear/see television	Personal listening device with amplifier (several commercial brands & compatible with hearing aids): closed captioning: TV magnifier
b. Complicated remote control	Simple remote with large buttons: universal remote control: voice activated remote control, clapper (Radio Shack)
c. Can't see or shuffle cards	Large print cards: automatic shuffler: card holder
d. Can't read small print	Magnifying glass: print enlargement system: scanner with electronic voice output
e. Glare on reading material	Use focused light source: avoid glossy paper for reading material: black ink vs. blue or pencil

10) SAFETY

PROBLEM	POTENTIAL INTERVENTION
a. Difficulty locking doors	Remote controlled door lock, door wedge
b. Difficulty opening door and knowing who is there	Automatic door openers, intercom at door (Nutone), lever door knob handles (BeOK), video intercom
c. Opening/closing windows/shades	Remote controlled windows and shades: lever and crank
d. Can't hear alarms, smoke detectors, phone ringing, or doorbell	Blinking lights, vibrating surfaces (Silent Call, Inc.)
e. Access to emergency egress	Must have alternative means of exiting home in case of emergency: fire blanket
f. Lighting	Illumination 1-2 feet from object being viewed: change bulbs when dim, not burned out: adequate lighting in stairways and hallways: night-lights
g. Glare	Light-colored sheer curtains on windows with direct sunlight: gradual decrease in illumination from foreground to background