

Gadgets to Make Life Easier

As we get older, some things get harder to do. Even simple things — climbing stairs, fixing meals, answering the phone — can become a challenge.

Luckily, there are gadgets, called assistive devices, to help. You can use them for things like:

- Getting dressed;
- Taking a shower;
- Reaching out-of-the-way places;
- Opening doors;
- Reading and writing;
- Remembering to take medicine;
- Hearing someone on the phone.

With a little thought, you can make some of these gadgets from items you have around the house. Color-coding your pill bottles with different-colored rubber bands to tell them apart is an example of a home-made assistive device.

There are also many helpful gadgets you can buy. Try to find out what's available to meet your needs and if your health insurance covers any of the cost. Ask a

doctor, nurse, or other health care professional for advice.

Here are some gadgets that could help if you have:

Trouble Hearing

- Telephone amplifiers with adjustable tone, pitch, and volume;
- Flashing-light phones, doorbells, and smoke alarm/carbon monoxide detectors;
- Cordless headphones for televisions;
- Vibrating alarm clocks you can put under your pillow.

Trouble Seeing

- Talking watches, clocks, timers, calculators, scales, and indoor/outdoor thermometers;
- Talking heart and blood pressure monitors;
- Writing aids such as large-grip pens and other pen designs that reduce shaking and muscle pain;
- Tactile knobs for stoves with raised dots to show settings;
- Battery-lighted magnifiers for reading;

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- Magnifiers for television and computer screens;
- Voice-activated, automatic telephone dialers;
- Remote controls with large buttons and numbers for televisions, cable boxes, VCRs, and DVDs;
- Computers with large-letter keyboards, and voice-recognition and speech software.

Trouble Remembering

- Electronic pill boxes with an alarm signal to take medicine;
- Telephone with memory dialing and spaces for pictures of frequent callers;
- Timed faucets that automatically turn water off;
- Electric appliances with automatic turnoff switches.

Trouble Getting Around And Performing Everyday Activities

- Long-handled “reachers” for retrieving items on low or high shelves;
- Gadgets that help you put on socks or stockings;
- Lever-style adapters that make turning door handles and faucets easier;
- Widened tub edges and grab bars to ease getting in and out of the bath;
- Clothing and shoes with Velcro fasteners;
- Specially designed cooking tools, such as cutting boards with finger guards and can openers that won't leave sharp edges;
- Rails and platforms that make it easier to get in and out of bed, chairs, or cars;
- Kitchen gadgets with large, easy-to-hold handles.

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601 E Street, NW
Washington, DC 20049
www.aarp.org

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