



Adaptations for the Bedroom

The bedroom offers unique challenges for persons with disabilities. Fortunately, many options exist that enable nearly any person to live more safely, independently, and with a higher quality of life.

For persons who use wheelchairs:

The use of a wheelchair can sometimes prevent a person from freely entering, moving about, and exiting their homes. Good planning and the proper application of technology can maximize independence and quality of life for all persons.

- The widths of the door openings are crucial. There should generally be at least 32 inches of width to properly enter and exit. Special swing-away hinges can be cheaply installed to increase the free space by as much as 3 inches. If the entrance is accessed from a 90° angle there must be additional room to pivot during the maneuver.
- The doorways should have a smooth surface underneath if possible. Navigating a bump as little as one inch high can make life difficult for many persons. Differing heights can be made more level with small ramps or tapered boards.
- The carpeting should be short, as heavy shag-type carpets require extra effort when pushing a wheelchair. Thick padding under carpet can also make movement in a wheelchair more difficult.
- Windows should be low enough to allow wheelchair users to see outside. Operation of windows and draperies can be adapted with high tech systems or simple, easy to use cranks.

For persons needing transfer assistance in and out of bed:

Many systems have been designed which assist in the transfer process. They vary from complex, costly units to simple, low-tech solutions. Every system should be designed with the user's strengths and limitations in mind.

- It is important to organize the room to leave sufficient space for transfers near the bed. This movement requires up to 60 inches of free space in each direction. Move all unnecessary furniture to make room.



- The most elaborate systems have tracks mounted onto the ceiling, which guide persons from wheelchairs to bed via a motorized sling. These are expensive, but are a good solution if someone is going to be using the system for a long time in the same place. This is not a “do it yourself” project. For safety reasons, hire a trained contractor for an installation. While the initial expense may be significant, independent self-care such as this may, in some cases, negate the need for others to assist.
- Some persons are able to rise from bed to a sitting position independently or with little assistance. They may merely need assistance rising up from a sitting position to standing, or need help with balance during this task. A bar mounted to the bed frame provides an excellent support for transfers such as this.
- Some lifts may only be needed temporarily, or the user may not be able to permanently mount the device. A floor based transfer device is best in situations like this.
- If possible, the bathroom should be located immediately adjacent to the bedroom. This minimizes the risk of falls during the night for those who walk.

For persons with sensory disabilities such as blindness or deafness:

Persons with a specific sensory loss may have difficulty noticing fire alarms, smoke alarms, or other emergency signals. It is important that emergency alert signals be designed to be of a multi-sensory nature (i.e. make sounds, flashes of light, and possibly even vibrations). In this way all persons will have a good chance to notice and react in the event of an emergency. As always, keep in mind the strengths and limitations of the persons involved.

- “Talking” Clocks are ideal for users with a visual disability.
- Alarm clocks can use alternative modes such as vibration to signal hearing impaired users. This would also be ideal in a situation when a person was both blind and deaf, and conventional sirens and flashers would be ineffective.
- Pagers, intercoms and telephones ringers can be recognized via these alternative-signaling methods as well.

Environmental Control Units:



Environmental control units, now known as Electronic Aids to Daily Living (EADLs), allow many individuals to independently control their environment. These include such areas as room temperature, lighting, TV, stereo, etc. Persons who lack the mobility to turn switches, pull cords, adjust the temperature, etc. in conventional ways may do so with special remote control units. These units operate as a typical TV remote does, except these units control many other crucial functions of the home as well.

- The controls can be operated in many ways (depending on the user's abilities). These include conventional buttons, voice activation, using a switch or joystick, or via a computer or communication device. Some communication devices such as the Dynavox have built-in EADL capabilities, and allow full use in this area for little or no extra cost.
 - Lower-tech versions are available as well. Extenders are available which place controls over electrical outlets, venetian blinds and light switches at a convenient height (i.e. approx. 42" wheelchair height).
 - For persons with impaired hand function, reaching high into lamps and fumbling with small switches can be difficult. Lamps can be easily modified to operate merely by touching the metal base.

Other adaptations:

- Pill reminders will automatically alert the user to the pills required for any given day. These devices come in low and high tech models. Low-tech units have pockets with medicines pre-arranged for each day. High tech models talk to the user and include reminders on timing and food intake, etc.



Resources:

AAA Medical
2095 W. Hampden Ave.
Englewood, CO 80111
303/781-1474
800/525-8586
www.aaamedical.com

Accent Information
P.O. Box 700
Bloomington, IL 61702
309/378-2961

Access Foundation
P.O. Box 356
Malverne, NY 11565
516/887-5798

[Accessible Systems](#), Inc.
5596 S. Sycamore
Littleton, CO 80120
[303-693-7787](tel:303-693-7787)
www.accessiblesystems.com

AdaptAbility
P.O. Box 515
Colchester, CT 06415-0515
800/243-9232
www.adaptability.com

Adaptive Environment Center, Inc.
374 Congress St., Suite 301
Boston, MA 02210
617/695-1225

ADCO
5661 S. Curtice St.

Littleton, CO 80120
800-726-0851
www.adcohearing.com

American Association of Retired
Persons
601 E Street NW
Washington, DC 20049
www.aarp.org

American Society on Aging
833 Market Street, Suite 511
San Francisco, CA 94103-1824
415/974-9600

Amputees in Motion
P.O. Box 2703
Escondido, CA 92033
619/454-9300

The ARC/National Headquarters
500 E. Border, Suite 300
Arlington, TX 76010
817/261-6003

Arthritis Foundation
1314 Spring St. NW
Atlanta, GA 30309
404/872-7100
Assisted Access, Inc.
P.O. Box 230
Lake Villa, IL 60046-0230
800/950-9655

Assistive Technology Partners
601 E. 18th Ave., Suite 130
Denver, CO 80203
303/315-1280 Main



Assistive Technology Partners

SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO ANSCHUTZ MEDICAL CAMPUS

800/255-3477 within Colorado

303/837-8964 TTY

303/837-1208 FAX

www.uchsc.edu/atp

Assistive Technology Partners
Western Slope Technical Assistance
Center (WesTAC)

2897 North Ave., Module 3A

Grand Junction, CO 81501

970/248-0876 Main

970/248-0877 FAX/TTY

www.uchsc.edu/atp

Association of Home Appliance
Manufacturers

20 North Wacker Dr.

Chicago, IL 60606

Barrier Free Environments

P.O. Box 30634

Raleigh, NC 27622

919/782-7823

Barrier Free Lifts

9230 Prince William St.

Manassas, VA 20110

800-582-8732

www.bfl-inc.com

Beyond Sight

5650 S. Windemere

Littleton, CO 80120

303-795-6455

www.beyondsight.com

Center for Accessible Housing
NCSU School of Design

P.O. Box 8613

Raleigh, NC 27695

919/515-3082

Dr. Leonard's Healthcare

100 Nixon Lane

P.O. Box 7821

Edison, NJ 08818

800/785-0880

www.drleonards.com

Gazette International

Working Institute

4502 Maryland Ave.

St. Louis, MO 63108

Gold Violin

P.O. Box 261639

San Diego, CA 92196

877/648-8465

www.goldviolin.com

Harriet Carter

Dept. 10

North Wales, PA 19455

800/377-7878

www.harrietcarter.com

Home Automation Association

808 17th St. NW, Suite 200

Washington, DC 20006

202/333-8579

www.homeautomation.org

Independent Living Aids, Inc.

27 E. Mall

Plainview, NY 11803

800/537-2118



www.independentliving.com

Information Center for Individuals
with Disabilities
Ft. Point Place, 27-43 Wormwood St.
Boston, MA 02210
617/727-5540

www.disability.net

Jensen Medical
1900 S. Quince St.
Denver, CO 80231
303/751-7282

LS & S Group, Inc.
P.O. Box 673
Northbrook, IL 60065
800/468-4789

www.lssgroup.com

Maxi Aids
P.O. Box 3209
Farmingdale, NY 11735
800/522-6294

www.maxiaids.com

Medical Home Supply
111 W. Evans Ave., #1
Denver, CO 80223
303/762-1263
800/873-8385

Miles Kimball
41 W. 8th Avenue
Oshkosh, WI 54906
702/617-3500

www.mileskimball.com

Mountain View Medical Supply
5370 Sheridan Blvd.
Arvada, CO 80002
303/455-1300

National Assoc. of Home Builders
NAHB Nat'l Research Center
400 Prince Georges Blvd.
Upper Marlboro, MD 20772
301/249-4000

National Head Injury Foundation
1140 Connecticut Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20036
800/444-6443

National Kitchen & Bath Association
687 Willow Grove St.
Hackettstown, NJ 07840
800/843-6522

North Coast Medical, Inc.
18305 Sutter Blvd.
Morgan Hill, CA 95037-2845
www.ncmedical.com

PAM Assistance Center
601 W. Maple
Lansing, MI 48906
800/274-7426

Paralyzed Veterans of America
Information Specialist
801 18th St. NW
Washington, DC 20006
202/416-7710

www.pvaorg.com



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Pathways HomeCare Center
11091 E. Mississippi Ave.
Aurora, CO 80010
303/365-2100
www.pathwayshomecare.org

Pathways HomeCare Center
1500 West Littleton Blvd., Unit #127
Littleton, CO 80120
303-798-5588
www.pathwayshomecare.org

Positive Vision Systems
1006 W. 104th Ave., PMB 301
Northglenn, CO 80234
303/341-1766

Roth Medical
5345 Arapahoe, #1
Boulder, CO 80303
303/442-2116

Sammons Preston
P.O. Box 5071
Bolingbrook, IL 60040-5071
800/323-5547
www.sammonspreston.com

Walter Drake
20 Drake Building
Colorado Springs, CO 80915
800/525-9291
www.wdrake.com

Whirlpool Corp. Appliance
Information Service #4300
Benton Harbor, MI 49022
800/253-1301

www.whirlpool.com

Youcan Toocan
2223 S. Monaco Pkwy.
Denver, CO 80222
303/759-9525
888/663-9396
www.youcantoocan.com



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