



# Low-Tech Devices for People with Visual Impairments

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With all the attention being given to high-tech solutions these days, it is important not to neglect the low-tech items that can also benefit people who are blind or visually impaired. There are many important tasks that can best be done quickly and simply by using a low-tech device. In this document, “low-tech” refers to any device without a microprocessor.

## **Braille Hand Writing**

Many low-tech and inexpensive devices are available to assist people with visual impairments in writing, either in print or Braille. Braille users can employ a stylus and a variety of Braille slates for writing on index cards, labeling cassettes, making marginal notes as well as for writing more formal documents. “Low-tech” hand writing aids include large print items and formats, such as large print check books and raised line notepaper, and writing templates which fit over standard documents, such as envelopes, checks, note paper and signature lines. These templates are made of metal, plastic or stiff cardboard, and provide spatial orientation for the user to handwrite critical information.

## **Magnifiers**

People who have some usable vision have a choice of magnification aids to use in all manners of situations. These devices include pocket sized magnification glasses, as well as devices for enlarging a line of print, or even an entire page of print at one time. Monocular and binocular devices can be used for magnifying items at a distance, such as street signs and marquees. Many magnification devices include attached lighting for enhanced visibility.

## **Kitchen and Household Items**

Many common kitchen and household devices are available with large print and/or Braille markings. These include measuring devices and replacement controls for appliances. Many gadgets have been designed or modified to produce audible cues or even limited speech. These include liquid level indicators, talking thermometers, and talking bathroom scales.



## Labeling

Many existing products for home school or office can be easily modified to make them more usable for people who have visual impairments. Various Braille and tactile tags can be obtained to mark clothing and canned or frozen food items. Braille and large print dymo-tape labeling guns are available to assist with labeling. In some cases, however, careful application of masking tape or spots of glue may provide the needed tactile markings.

## Watches, Clocks and Timers

Time keeping devices have been designed in a variety of ways to make them more useful to people with visual impairments. Such devices typically involve large print displays, Braille markings, “speech” chips, or some combination. The range of such devices includes wristwatches, portable alarms, clock radios, kitchen and medication timers. Some of these devices, such as talking clocks, are readily available at retail stores such as Radio Shack and K-Mart.

### VENDORS

American Printing House for the Blind  
1839 Frankfort Avenue  
P.O. Box 6085  
Louisville, Kentucky 40206-0085  
502/895-2405  
800/223-1839  
[www.aph.org](http://www.aph.org)

Ann Morris Enterprises  
890 Fams Ct  
East Meadows, NY 11554  
516/292-9232  
[annmor@netcom.com](mailto:annmor@netcom.com)  
<http://tribeca.ios.com/tildaannm2>

Beyond Sight  
5650 S. Windermere

Littleton, CO 80120  
303-795-6455  
[www.beyondsight.com](http://www.beyondsight.com)

Capabilities, Inc.  
6805 W 88th Ave  
Westminster, CO 80021  
720/214-0339  
[www.capabilitiesinc.net](http://www.capabilitiesinc.net)

Carolyn's  
PO Box 14577  
Bradenton, FL 34208  
800/648-2266 Fax  
813/761-8306

Independent Living Aids  
27 East Mall  
Plainview, NY 11803  
516/752-8080



# Assistive Technology Partners

SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO ANSCHUTZ MEDICAL CAMPUS

516-752-3135 Fax

[www.independentliving.com](http://www.independentliving.com)

LS&S Group

PO Box 673

Northbrook, IL 60065

847/498-9777

800/468-4789

847/498-1482 Fax

[lsgrp@aol.com](mailto:lsgrp@aol.com)

<http://www.lssgroup.com>

Maxiaids

42 Executive Blvd

Farmingdale, NY 11735

516/752-0521

800/522-6294

516/752-0689

[sales@maxiaids.com](mailto:sales@maxiaids.com)

<http://www.maxiaids.com>

NY Lighthouse for the Blind

36-02 Northern Blvd

Long Island City, NY 1101-1614

718/937-9338

800/829-0500

[jjenkins@lighthouse.org](mailto:jjenkins@lighthouse.org)

<http://www.lighthouse.org>

Pathways HomeCare Center

11091 E. Mississippi Ave.

Aurora, CO 80012

303/365-2100

[www.pathwayshomecare.org](http://www.pathwayshomecare.org)

StayACTIVE Shoppes

550 E. Thornton Pkwy, #212

Thornton, CO 80229

303/892-6000

[www.stayactiveshoppes.com](http://www.stayactiveshoppes.com)

Youcan Toocan

2223 S. Monaco Pkwy.

Denver, CO 80222

888/663-9396

303/759-9525

[www.youcantoocan.com](http://www.youcantoocan.com)

## OTHER RESOURCES

American Council of the Blind of Colorado

1536 Wynkoop Street Suite 203

Denver, CO. 80202

303/831-0117

888/775-2221

[www.acbco.org](http://www.acbco.org)

American Foundation for the Blind

11 Penn Plaza #300

New York, NY 10001

800/232-5463

[www.acb.org](http://www.acb.org)

Assistive Technology Partners

601 E. 18<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Suite 130

Denver, CO 80203

303/315-1280

303/837-8964 TTY

303/827-1208 Fax

800/255-3477 within Colorado

[www.uchsc.edu/atp](http://www.uchsc.edu/atp)

Assistive Technology Partners

Western Slope Technical Assistance

Center (WesTAC)



## Assistive Technology Partners

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UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO ANSCHUTZ MEDICAL CAMPUS

2897 North Ave., Module 3A  
Grand Junction, CO 81501  
970/248-0876  
970/248-0877  
[www.uchsc.edu/atp](http://www.uchsc.edu/atp)

National Federation of the Blind  
2233 W. Shepperd Ave.  
Littleton, CO 80120  
303/778-1130  
800/401-4632  
[www.nfb.org](http://www.nfb.org)

Seedlings  
PO Box 51924  
Livonia, MI 48151-5924

800/777-8552  
734/427-8552 Fax  
[www.seedlings.org](http://www.seedlings.org)

The Large Print Book  
PO Box 5375  
Englewood, CO 80155  
303/721-7511  
303/721-7512 Fax  
800/305-2743

Radio Shack, Sharper Image or other stores that supply electronic devices may also carry low-tech devices for the visually impaired

**For more information contact:  
Assistive Technology Partners  
601 East 18<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Suite 130  
Denver, CO 80203**

**303.315.1280 office  
303.837.1208 fax  
303.837.3477 TTY  
800.255.3477 toll free**

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[www.assistivetechologypartners.org](http://www.assistivetechologypartners.org)**

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