



Independent Living Aids for Personal Care and Grooming

We all feel better when we look good. If problems with weakness, coordination or paralysis make daily routines difficult, the bathroom is one room where modifications can really pay off. These are just a few of a wide variety of adaptations and devices to make personal care and grooming routines easier.

Dental Care



Denture Brush with Suction Cup

You can build up your toothbrush handle for easier gripping by adding a ready-made, built-up handle, a child's bicycle handle grip, or a palm or wrist cuff. Foam tubing called Rubazote, available from medical suppliers, or foam curlers, have a hollow center to insert a handle into. Extension handles, of the type used with eating utensils, can be helpful when you can't comfortably reach your mouth.

A denture brush can be attached to a sink or counter with a suction cup device. Flossing may be easier if you use a floss holder, available at most drug stores; it too can be fitted with a built-up handle. "Pump" style

toothpaste dispensers are easier for some people to manipulate. A twisting key is another possibility, while a third alternative is toothpowder, which you can simply dip a wet brush into.

Hair Care

The handle adaptations can be used to modify combs and brushes as well. Extension handles are particularly useful if arm or shoulder motion is limited, but your motions will lose some force due to loss of leverage. If you use a hair dryer, mount it on the wall to leave your hands free. The bracket should swivel so the dryer can blow in any direction. Hair washing is easiest in the shower; if you bathe in a tub, a hand sprayer is useful for rinsing. Pump dispensers or flip lids ease opening and closing shampoo and rinse bottles.

Skin Care

Liquid soap in a soap mitt eliminates fussing with slippery bars of soap and awkward facecloths. You can buy one inexpensively, or make a simple one yourself from a small amount of terrycloth.

Shaving

Electric razors are easier to use and safer than blades. A bracket or clamp can be rigged to hold a razor firmly to a counter or wall while you move your face against it. A Velcro strap holder can help secure the razor in your hand.

Nails

A nailbrush can be mounted on the edge of the counter or sink with suction cups. Attach a nail file or emery board to a piece of wood or tape it to the countertop to stabilize it for one-handed use. You can attach a nail clipper to a piece of plywood to give you better control, or increase the leverage by lengthening the handle. Larger clippers for trimming toe nails, available at most drug stores, may be easier to manipulate for fingernails.

Bath Aids

Safety is the first consideration. Safety treads or rubber mats on the bottom of tubs and showers are simple and inexpensive. Test and adjust water temperature before stepping into a bath or shower. Set water heaters below 120 degrees, and ask others not to run water elsewhere in the house to prevent temperature fluctuations. For extra protection, pressure balancers to prevent surges of hot or cold water are available from plumbing supply stores.

Handrails that clamp to the side of the bathtub and gripping bars for tub and shower walls can be purchased from medical suppliers.



Tub Handrails / Tub Seat

Organize items that you'll need before you get in the tub or shower. If you use a reaching aid, put it near the tub. A shelf across the tub keeps useful items near at hand and offers another surface to steady yourself against.

Bath brushes with long handles are useful for scrubbing various hard-to-reach places; handles can be built up or bent to improve your control.

Another way to scrub your back is to attach a piece of terry cloth, sponge, or loofah to a strip of sturdy fabric or plastic to pull from side to side. These scrubbers are available for sale at medical supply stores, but you can easily make your own.

Vendors

Assisted Access, Inc.
P.O. Box 230
Lake Villa, IL 60046-0230
800/950-9655

Beyond Sight
5650 S. Windemere
Littleton, CO 80120
303/795-6455
www.beyondsight.com

Dynamic Living
428 Hayden Station Road
Windsor, CT 06095-1302
888/940-0605
www.dynamic-living.com

Dr. Leonard's Healthcare
100 Nixon Lane
P.O. Box 7821
Edison, NJ 08818
800/785-0880
www.drleonards.com

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
Independent Living Aids, Inc.
27 E. Mall
Plainview, NY 11803
800/537-2118
www.independentliving.com

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

Maddak, Inc./Ableware
Pequannock, NJ 07440
201/628-7600
800/443-4926
973/628-7600
www.maddak.com

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

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

Mountain Aire Medical Supply, Inc.
2490 Patterson, Suite 5
Grand Junction, CO 81505
800/578-8986
www.mountainairemedicalsupply.com

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

RCC Medical Supply
830 Lashley St., Suite B
Longmont, CO 80501
303/682-0100

Rocky Mountain Medical
Equipment
3245 S. Wadsworth Blvd.
Lakewood, CO 80227
303/806-8001
www.rockymtnmedical.com

Rocky Mountain Medical
Equipment
5620 N. Union Blvd.
Colorado Springs, CO 80918
719/593-0911
888/791-6797
www.rockymtnmedical.com

Sammons Preston
Patterson Medical
4 Sammons Court
Bolingbrook, IL 60440
800/323-5547
www.pattersonmedical.com

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

Youcan Toocan
6460 E Yale Avenue, unit E10
Denver, CO 80222
303/759-9525
888/663-9396
www.youcantoocan.com

OTHER RESOURCES

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
www.asaging.org

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

The Arc of the United States
1010 Wayne Ave., Suite 650
Silver Spring, MD 20910
301-565-3842
www.thearc.org

Arthritis Foundation
P.O. Box 7669
Atlanta, GA 30357-0669
404/872-7100
www.arthritis.org

Assistive Technology Partners
601 E. 18th Ave., Suite 130
Denver, CO 80203
303/315-1280 Main
800/255-3477 within Colorado
303/837-1208 Fax
GeneralInfo@AT-Partners.org
www.assistivetechologypartners.org

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SouthEast Technical Assistance
Center (SETAC)
4825 Lorna Place
Colorado Springs, CO 80215
719/380.6229 MAIN
719/380.6230 Fax
SETACinfo@at-partners.org
www.assistivetechologypartners.org

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Western Slope Technical
Assistance Center (WesTAC)
2897 North Ave., Module 3A
Grand Junction, CO
81501970/248-0877 Fax
970/248-0876 Main
WESTACInfo@AT-Partners.org
www.assistivetechologypartners.org

Brain Injury Association of
America, 8201 Greensboro Dr.,
Suite 611, McLean, VA 22102
703/761-0750
www.biausa.org

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

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

Post-Polio Health International
(PHI)
4207 Lindell Boulevard, #110
Saint Louis, Missouri 63108-2915
USA
314-534-0475
www.post-polio.org

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