Participant Materials

Participant Materials include the following handouts:

- Activity 1: Independent Living in Later Life Questionnaire
- Activity 2: Independent Living Activity
- Activity 3: Home Modifications for Independent Living Checklist
- Ways to Get Help with Home Modifications
- Selecting Gadgets and Tools for Independent Living
- Helpful Resources for Independent Living
Adapted from materials developed by Deborah Byrne, Oregon State University Extension
Family and Community Development Faculty, Central Oregon
**Activity 1: Independent Living in Later Life Questionnaire**

**Directions:** Circle your answer ("true" or "false") next to each statement.

1. Older adults can distinguish the colors green and blue more easily than the colors yellow, orange, and red.  
   True  False

2. Typically, an individual age 80 or older will require up to Four-times the amount of light as the average 25-year-old to perform the same activities.  
   True  False

3. Vision loss affects older people more than any other chronic condition.  
   True  False

4. You may have a hearing loss if you have difficulty hearing high-pitched sounds.  
   True  False

5. When someone has a hearing loss, it is best to speak directly into the person’s ear and shout.  
   True  False

6. The number and sensitivity of taste buds increases with age.  
   True  False

7. By age 80, about 40 percent of people have difficulty identifying common substances by smell.  
   True  False

8. Changes in the ability to smell can affect an older person’s safety.  
   True  False

9. Older adults may not experience pain from traumas, such as burns, until the skin has already been damaged.  
   True  False

10. Medicare or Medicaid will pay all or part of the cost of home medical equipment *without* a physician’s order if the equipment is considered medically necessary.  
    True  False
Activity 2: Independent Living in Later Life Activity

Match the descriptions below with the correlating tool's number

___ Faucet Turner [home helper]: Faucet turner adjusts to fit different size faucets. Easy to use for individuals with limited dexterity. Available at home health care/medical supply stores. Price: $10.00.

___ Check Writing Guide [writing/reading aid]: Check-writing stencil useful for individuals with visual impairments who need help in filling out checks. Available free by contacting the Oregon Commission for the Blind.

___ Cane Butler [mobility aid]: Clip attaches to 3/8" - 1" diameter cane shaft. Allows cane to be supported on any table or desk. Foam disk on either side creates enough friction to hold cane in place. Available at some pharmacies and through catalogs. Price: $3.95.

___ Scoop Dish [dining helper]: Dish is raised and curved on one side to help individuals get their food onto their fork or spoon – makes it easier and neater for people to feed themselves. The unbreakable plastic dish stays in place with a non-skid, rubber padded base to keep the dish from slipping. Dishwasher safe. Not recommended for microwave use. Available at home health care/medical supply stores, and through catalogs. Price: $6.65.

___ Magnifying Sheet [reading aid]: Reading magnifier comes in all shapes and sizes for people with vision impairments. Ideal for reading small print, contracts and more. Sheet is large enough to cover an entire page. Place moveable lightweight magnifying sheet on top of reading material and lift. Available at office supply stores. Price: $4.95.

___ Pen/Pencil Grips [writing aid]: Reduces strain for a person who has difficulty grasping. Soft grips slip over pens and pencils to provide a better grip for individuals who need extra support. Available at office supply stores, and through catalogs. 3 per package 90 cents.

___ Sock Aid [dressing aid]: Easy-to-use aid comfortably helps people with limited mobility to pull on socks or stockings by reducing the need for excessive reaching or bending. Place sock over the flexible plastic funnel-shaped sleeve, insert foot into sock aid and pull the cord’s two soft, foam handles to bring sock over heel and up leg. Cords can be cut to adjust length. Requires two hands to use. Available at home health care/medical supply stores, and through catalogs. Price: $9.00 - $14.00.
Activity 2: Independent Living in Later Life Activity- Continued

___ Touch Light [home helper]: Touch light is easy on hands and finger. By pressing the top of the light it will turn on and off. Can be used by those individuals with limited hand usage to provide light where needed -- nightstands, closet, stairwell or bathroom. Battery-powered light sits or hangs anywhere with hardware or tape (not included). Available at some drug and mega stores, and through catalogs. Price: $4.00 - $7.00.

___ Swivel Peeler [food preparation aid]: This peeler features a built-up, rounded and easy-to-hold handle, even when wet so a person can peel vegetables safely and easily. Great aid for those individuals with weak and limited hand grasp. Available at mega stores, some supermarkets, and through catalogs. Price $6.00 - $8.00.

___ Button Aid/Zipper Pull [dressing aid]: Used for fastening difficult buttons and zippers when a person has diminished grip. Can be used with only one hand. The zipper pull can hook the zipper tongue and pull it closed without straining a person’s arm and back. The rubber handle is easy to grasp. The button loop on the other end is used by pass the loop through the buttonhole over the button. Then pull back through the hole and release. Available at home health care stores and through catalogs. Price: $7.00 - $9.00.

___ Easy Door Grip [door knob aid]: Deep grooved rubber grip fits over standard doorknobs. It provides non-slipping traction and added turning leverage. Helpful for people with restricted movement and limited strength or hand control. Available at some pharmacies and through catalogs. Price: $8.00.

___ EZ-Key Turner [home helper]: Key turner is easy to grip and turn. Helps a person with limited dexterity overcome hard to turn locks and gain quick access to his or her home, condo, and more. Can be used by a person whose strength has been temporarily or permanently diminished. Found at medical supply and mega stores and through catalogs. 3 per package in 3 different colors aids in key/lock identification. Available at home health care and mega stores, and through catalogs. Price: $6.85.

Note:

The source and price of the assistive devices may vary.
Activity 3:

Home Modifications for Independent Living Checklist

Take a moment to review the following items in your home to be sure you’ve covered some of the safety “basics.”

Ask Yourself:

☐ Will my home meet my needs in early and late retirement?
  - Is my home conveniently laid out for daily activities?
  - Are the stairs likely to be a problem?
  - Are the passageways and hallways in critical areas wide enough for wheelchair access if necessary (Kitchen, bathroom, bedrooms)?
  - Can upgrades be easily made (handrails, grab bars in bathroom, hand levers instead on door knobs)?

☐ Is my home and surrounding neighborhood safe?
  - Is my home in an area where I have easy access to services (grocery store, doctor, etc.)?
  - Is a bus route close by?
  - Is there a neighborhood watch or neighbors I know who can help in emergencies?

☐ Will my home remain affordable?
  - Is the home energy efficient (A factor for on-going affordability and comfort)?
  - Will I be able to handle the upkeep of the house and yard (Can I afford services to help me)?
Ways to Get Help with Home Modifications

It is important to protect yourself from home repair fraud when hiring a contractor. Insist on a written agreement, which should be clear, concise, and complete with only a small down payment and a starting and completion date. Ask for written warranties and guarantees that relate to the work and products. Include a clause in the agreement requiring the contractor to clean the worksite afterward. This is to ensure that no debris is left behind.

To protect yourself from home repair fraud, get recommendations from friends or relatives of the names of good contractors they have used, or select at least three contractors from the Yellow Pages and ask for bids. Hire a licensed and bonded contractor. Be specific about the work you want. Avoid contractors whose only address and telephone number is provided by an answering service. Check the references of previous customers. Try to see some of the contractor’s completed projects. You can also call the local Better Business Bureau or the state office of Consumer Affairs.

Be specific about the work you want. Comparison shop by getting written cost estimates and bids from each contractor you’re truly interested in hiring.

Ask for written warranties and guarantees that related to the work and products to be used. Include a clause in the agreement requiring the contractor to clean up. This is to ensure that there will not be any debris left once the work is completed.

When signing the contract make certain that both you and the contractor use full signatures, not just initials. Consider having the agreement reviewed by your lawyer if it is complicated or a large dollar amount.

Make the final payment only after the project is completed. Be sure you are satisfied that all work meets the standards spelled out in the agreement. Also, it is important to get written warranties for materials and workmanship and proof that all subcontractors and suppliers have been paid.

Never pay in cash. Make payments by check, payable to the company--never to an individual.
Selecting and Using Gadgets & Tools for Independent Living

According to a recent AARP housing survey, 85 percent of older Americans want to stay in their homes for the rest of their lives. Fortunately, there are ways to improve safety and accessibility of one’s home to make that possible.

Basic self-care is an important part of independent living. Knowing about simple devices and a few changes in the home environment can help older people maintain or improve the quality of their lives. Many adaptive devices have been designed specifically to help older people who have difficulty performing everyday functions of life. They are attractive and designed for maximum comfort. However, successfully selecting and using adaptive devices can sometimes be expensive and time consuming.

Several important considerations in choosing devices or health care equipment are:
- A person must be physically and cognitively capable of using the device effectively.
- People tend to use aids that are not complicated, cumbersome, or cosmetically unappealing.
- Decisions about selecting adaptive devices, products and services need to be made individually to fit the person’s lifestyle. When assisting others in choosing devices/equipment allow significant input about choice. Assist the person in finding the devices/equipment that will do what he/she needs it to do. People function in a variety of settings every day, so why and when the device/equipment will be used becomes vital in choosing it.
- Assistive devices can be found in supermarkets, mega stores, hardware stores, pharmacies, building and plumbing supply centers.
- The cost and choice of home health care or medical equipment varies widely. Devices and equipment may be a significant out-of-pocket expense since health care providers usually do not fund them. Check your coverage because some insurance companies will cover all or part of the cost.
- Be informed before buying or signing any rental contract for home medical equipment, or making expensive home modifications. Get as much information as possible about the devices, equipment and services as you can.
- Consult with your doctor, or a physical or occupational therapist before making decisions to be sure that the devices/equipment are appropriate for improving function and ensuring safety. Salespeople may not have training in assessing a person’s medical,
social and environmental factors to make a good decision for what is best. Check with an occupational therapist for possible low-cost substitutes for expensive equipment. Ensuring safety. Salespeople may not have training in assessing a person’s medical, social and environmental factors to make a good decision for what is best. Check with an occupational therapist for possible low-cost substitutes for expensive equipment.

- Never buy medical equipment from a telephone solicitor, a door-to-door salesperson or a person who calls before the doctor or hospital discharge planner has told you what medical equipment will be needed.

- Call your local area agency on aging (AAA) to locate community programs. AAA’s phone number is listed under “County Government” in the telephone book’s White Pages or call the National Eldercare Locator at 1-800-677-1116 to reach the “area agency on aging” in your hometown.

- Sometimes, it is possible to borrow home medical equipment, i.e., wheelchair or walker from an equipment loan closet assisting the elderly. You might consider contacting the American Cancer Society, Salvation Army, Muscular Dystrophy Association, and National Easter Seal Society to find out if they have this service.

- Check your local Yellow Pages under “Medical Equipment and Supplies”, “Home Health Care Products and Services” and “Rehabilitation or Medical Supplies” for adaptive devices and home medical equipment.
Helpful Resources for Independent Living

ORGANIZATIONS/AGENCIES

AARP: To order one free copy of the materials listed below, you can write, email or call. Include the name of the booklet and stock number along with your name and mailing address. Allow 4 to 6 weeks for delivery. AARP Fulfillment- 601 E Street NW, Washington, DC. 20049. 1.800.424.3410. TTY: 202.434.2479. [http://www.aarp.com](http://www.aarp.com)

- D16270 How Well Does Your Home Meet Your Needs?
- D16691 Universal Design and Home Modification
- D16912 Simple Changes for a Safer Home
- D17035 Tools and Gadgets for Independent Living
- D16912 Simple Ways to Make a Difference
- D17044 Home Solutions: Options to Meet Changing Needs
- D12470 The Do-Able Renewable Home: Making Your Home Fit Your Needs

Abledata: Publishes fact sheets and an Informed Consumer Guide for assistive technology. Call 1.800.227.0216

American Cancer Society: Staff members can answer questions on a broad range of subjects such as cancer detection, treatment and the latest research. Brochures are available which list information and services regarding local chapters. Equipment loan is available to cancer patients. Call 1.800.227.2345

American Foundation for the Blind: Provides non-medical information referral services, and free written materials. Call 1.800.232.5463. Web Address: [http://www.afb.org](http://www.afb.org)

Arthritis Foundation Information Line: The foundation provides information and makes referrals to local chapters that sponsor support groups, events and classes. Call 1.800.283.7800

Area Agency on Aging (AAA): Governmental agency responsible for carrying out programs mandated and funded by the federal Older Americans Act. [http://www.aoa.dhhs.gov/agingsites/or.html](http://www.aoa.dhhs.gov/agingsites/or.html)

Eldercare Locator: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services: The Eldercare Locator is an excellent resource for information about federally funded assistance programs and services for senior citizens nationwide. Its help line identifies many healthcare services, living facilities and resources to get help in your area. Call the National Aging Information Center 1.800.677-1116. Web Address: [http://www.eldercare.gov/](http://www.eldercare.gov/)

Lighthouse International: Information on every aspect of vision loss and eye diseases, as well as referrals to state agencies, local services, support groups and low-vision centers. Catalogs available. Call: 1.800.334.5497
Helpful Resources for Independent Living- Page 2

ORGANIZATIONS/AGENCIES- Continued

National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Handicapped: Part of the Library of Congress. Lending library materials available for books, tapes, disk and Braille (as well as equipment for playing tapes and disks. All material is free. Call 1.800.424.8567

Self-Help for Hard of Hearing People, Inc. (SHHH): Affiliated with the National Institute on Aging and the Administration on Aging, with links to both agency sites. Information is available for community services and hearing loss. Web address: http://www.shhh.org

PUBLICATIONS


One-Handed in a Two-Handed World: Published 1997. Write to: Tommy K. Mayer, Prince Gallison Press, P.O. Box 23, Hanover Station, Boston, MA 02113-0001. Call: 1.617.367.5815

Selected Mail Order and Catalog Resources for Family Caregivers: Published 1997. Write to: Family Caregiver Alliance, 690 Market Street, Ste. 600, San Francisco, CA 94104. Call: 1.415.434.3388 Web Address: http://www.infor@caregiver.org

INTERNET RESOURCES

Administration on Aging- Directory on Aging: Lists web sites by county, state, organization, subject and topic. Academic and research sites also listed, as well as links to other directories on aging. Web Address: http://www.aoa.dhhs.gov/default.htm


Senior Link: Web Address: http://www.seniorlink.com
Helpful Resources for Independent Living- Page 3

SPECIALITY PRODUCT CATALOGS

Listed below are companies that sell adaptive devices and home health products.

AlumiRamp, Inc.: Specializes in ramping products and offers simple modular, mini and quick ramp systems and kits. Also provides ramp accessories such as handrails, support assemblies, and platforms. Call: 1.800.800.3864. Web Address: http://www.alumiramp.com


JC Penney’s Special Needs Catalog: Catalog features home health products (Available at local Penny’s stores). Call: 1.800.222.6161. Web Address: http://www.jcpenny.com

MaxiAids: Excellent catalog featuring a wide assortment of innovative and helpful products for the blind, visually impaired, physically challenged, hard of hearing, deaf and/or senior citizens with special needs, such as speech synthesizers. Call: 1.800.522.6294 Web Address: http://www.MAXIAIDS.com

Sammons Preston Enrichments, Inc.: Call: 1.800.323.5547 Web Address: http://www.sammonspreston.com

The Lighthouse Catalog: Published by Lighthouse International. Find a large assortment of equipment for individuals with visual impairments.

GOURMET FOOD AND SPICE CATALOGS

Penzey’s Ltd.: Call: 1.415.679.7207. Web Address: http://www.penzeys.com

Williams-Sonoma: Call: 1.800.541.1262. Web Address: http://www.williams-sonoma.com

Brand names and resources listed are for product identification only. No endorsement is intended.
Selected References


