

# Everyday Strategies for Seniors and Those with Disabilities

## Assistive Technology: Tools That Support Everyday Living

Most people hope to remain in their homes as they age, but changing mobility or health needs can make daily tasks harder. Assistive technology (AT) offers tools that help people of all ages and abilities stay independent, safe, and comfortable.

## What Assistive Technology Includes

AT ranges from high-tech devices to simple tools that make everyday activities easier. Many people use AT without realizing it.

- Smartphones, voice-activated devices, and helpful software
- Low-tech supports like adapted pencil grips
- Tools for household tasks, mobility, communication, and safety

These devices are designed for older adults and people with disabilities, but they can benefit anyone who wants to make daily life easier.

## Examples of AT Devices

- Hearing aids
- Vehicle modifications such as hand controls or wheelchair lifts
- Bathing and eating assistance tools
- Software for hearing or visual challenges
- Grab bars and fall-prevention equipment
- Eyeglasses and magnifiers
- Communication devices for speech disabilities
- Wheelchairs, walkers, and other mobility supports

## Finding the Right AT for You

Choosing the right tools can feel overwhelming, but every state has a State Assistive Technology Act Program that helps people explore and access AT.

These programs offer:

- Device demonstrations and short-term loans so you can try equipment first
- Reuse programs with gently used devices at reduced cost

Financing options, including cash loan programs, to help you obtain needed AT



## Improvements for Independence

Home modifications help people stay safe, comfortable, and independent as they age. Many adults want to remain in their homes long-term, but homes often need updates to support changing mobility, balance, and strength. Making improvements early can prevent falls and reduce the likelihood of needing long-term care.

## Types of Helpful Modifications

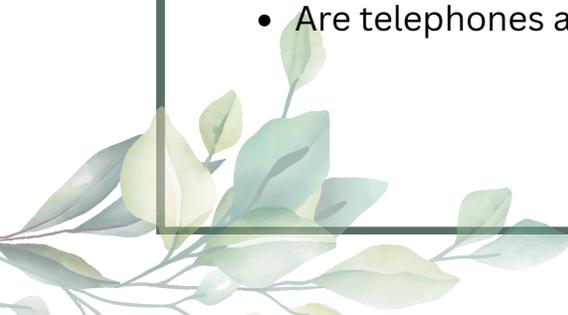
Home updates generally fall into two categories:

- Accessibility changes – widening doorways, lowering countertops, or creating step-free entrances for people using wheelchairs or walkers.
- Adaptability changes – adding grab bars, improving lighting, or installing non-slip flooring to support balance and reduce fall risk.

These improvements usually don't require major renovations and can make a home safer for everyone.

## Home Safety Assessment

A whole-home review helps identify areas that may need attention now or in the future. A “no” to any of these questions may signal a need for improvement:

- Are exterior walkways and entrances well-lit?
  - Is there a step-free entrance?
  - Are entrance doors easy to operate?
  - Does the main floor include a kitchen, bedroom, and full bathroom?
  - Are doorways wide enough for mobility devices or service animals?
  - Is carpeting secure and flat?
  - Are area rugs secured with non-slip padding?
  - Are walkways free of cords, clutter, and furniture hazards?
  - Do stairways have sturdy handrails on both sides?
  - Are cabinets easy to reach?
  - Is there a step-free shower?
  - Are grab bars installed near the shower and toilet?
  - Do tubs and showers have non-slip surfaces?
  - Do smoke detectors provide both visual and audio alerts?
  - Are telephones accessible on all floors?
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## 🚫 Preparing for Long-Term Living

A thoughtful assessment and early improvements help ensure a home remains safe and supportive as needs change. These updates can reduce accidents and make aging in place more realistic and comfortable.

## 🚶♂️ Taking Steps to Prevent Falls

Falls become more serious with age, but they are not an inevitable part of getting older. Most falls can be prevented by understanding your risks and taking proactive steps to stay steady, strong, and safe.

## ⚠️ Why Falls Happen

Several factors increase fall risk for older adults:

- Health conditions such as diabetes, depression, osteoarthritis, obesity, or high blood pressure
- Environmental hazards like clutter, poor lighting, or slippery rugs
- Risky behaviors such as rushing, climbing on chairs, or overreaching

Recognizing these risks is the first step toward prevention.

## 💪 Stay Active

Regular movement helps maintain balance, coordination, and muscle strength. Activities like walking, gardening, or group exercise classes keep your body strong and your reactions quick.

## 👤 Manage Chronic Conditions

Good overall health lowers fall risk. Seeing your healthcare provider regularly, taking medications as prescribed, eating well, and choosing safe forms of exercise all support stability and strength.

## 💊 Review Medications

Some medications can cause dizziness or drowsiness, increasing fall risk. Medicines linked to higher risk include sedatives, diuretics, and those for high blood pressure or anxiety. Discuss all prescriptions and over-the-counter drugs with your doctor.

## 👁️ Check Your Vision

Vision changes naturally with age. Annual eye exams help ensure your prescription is current and screen for treatable conditions like cataracts or glaucoma.





## Make Your Home Safer

A safer home reduces fall risk significantly. Consider:

- Installing grab bars in bathrooms
- Removing or securing slippery throw rugs
- Improving lighting indoors and outdoors
- Clearing walkways of clutter, cords, and debris
- Asking a family member or neighbor to help spot hazards you may overlook

Staying active, managing health, and creating a safer home environment all work together to reduce fall risk.

Resources:

Administration for Community Living - [www.acl.gov](http://www.acl.gov)

## Scripture for the Month

**"Nevertheless, I will bring health and healing to it; I will heal my people and will let them enjoy abundant peace and security."**

**~ Jeremiah 33:6 (NIV)**

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