



## Single Handed Cooking Challenges

The following are ideas to use to circumvent or compensate for physical challenges in the kitchen.

**Strength Challenges:** Reduce the need to use muscle force by

- a. using light weight materials such as plastics, melamine, baskets, etc.
- b. use sharp knives to reduce resistance and the need for force

**Coordination challenges:** Challenges in coordination can affect how smoothly an action is completed. It can also affect how objects are stabilized or manipulated or both. These issues can create some difficulty during the entire meal preparation and clean up process, but there are so many things that can be done to compensate or adjust. Here are a few ideas to compensate for coordination issues due to:

**Stability:** Look for alternative ways to achieve stability when doing kitchen related activities. Here are a variety of examples:

**A. Stirring while standing: Difficulty holding a mixing bowl while standing and stirring**

1. Open a kitchen drawer.
2. Make some space.
3. Place a mixing bowl (salad bowl, soup bowl) in the drawer.
4. Close drawer as tight as possible.
5. (For even more stability, press hip against the drawer to keep drawer and bowl as stable as possible.)
6. Stir.

**B. Stirring while sitting: Difficulty holding a mixing bowl while sitting and stirring**

1. Place bowl between the knees.
2. Use bowls with a more pointed bottom when possible. (This decreases the amount of strength and coordination needed to control the bowl while mixing, making it easier to get the job done.)
3. Consider using unbreakable bowls with edges.

### C. To prevent slipping:

1. Rubber or dycem mat to reduce slipping of bowls, pans, other containers
2. Dampen a towel, cloth, paper towel placing under a bowl, dish, etc.
3. Bowls with rubberized base
4. Grater with suction cups
5. Push a pan, bowl, plate against the edge of the wall for additional support



### D. Other useful assistive devices for kitchen use for in-coordination, decline in strength, range of motion:

1. Bowl or pan holders
2. Cutting board with nails: Makes spreading, chopping, dicing, cutting easier (Cutting boards can hold onions, apples, bread, potatoes, etc.)
3. Jar openers: Now available for one handed use
4. Clamp on vegetable peelers
5. Folding pan holder (stabilizes pots or pans without need to use two hands)
6. Fruit and veggie scrubber: suctions against side of sink
7. Sharp knives (reduces resistance)
8. Toss and chop scissors



## Pinching and Release

Finger pinching, hand gripping and releasing are needed to manipulate utensils, food and objects such as boxes, cans and jars. Other things and methods can be used to reduce the need for finger movements or hand function. Here are some basic ideas:

1. Make the grip larger (requires less muscle strength and can make holding easier).
2. Add texture to make the grip easier to hold.
3. Utensil holders can be used when grip is not possible or difficult.
4. Rocker knives: Use a rocking motion to cut, rather than having to use a fork with one hand to stabilize food to cut with the other hand.
5. Self opening kitchen shears (reduces need to open and close scissors).

## Range of Motion

Limitations in range of motion (ROM) can affect reaching and other movement in the kitchen. Rearranging and reorganization to eliminate or reduce the need to reach can make meal preparation and clean up easier.

When rearranging and reorganization are not enough, assistive devices to compensate for limitations in ROM can be very helpful in the kitchen. Some examples include:

1. Reachers: Extend ability to reach
2. Utility cart
3. Stand up dust pan and brush: Extended handle reduces need for reach

