



Helpful Tips for Independent Living

Doing basic ADL requires muscle strength, coordination, balance, cognitive and sensory skills and adequate joint range of motion. All of these things depend on good blood circulation and good breathing ability.

The environment also plays a big role in living independently. When the environment is not helpful, even able bodied people can be dis-abled.

A problem with any one or combination of these factors can cause a loss of independence.

There are many strategies that can be used to maximize abilities in BADL. The following are some generic tips for independent living.

1. **Be aware of changes that reduce abilities.**

- Pay attention to changes
- Find the cause and fix It
- Consult with health care specialists as soon as a change is noticed

2. **Manage pain:** Work to eliminate or reduce pain that can decrease desire or ability to do a BADL.

3. **Make sure the home is safe:**

- Place safety rails where support would be helpful
- Make sure lighting throughout the home is bright enough
- Make sure pathways are free from obstacles
- Make sure floors and bathtub/shower are not slippery
- Make sure pathways are well lit
- Remove any hazards that could cause falls or injuries

4. Use [assistive devices](#) for safety and to make doing possible:
 - **Bath tub safety mats:** Reduces tub/shower floor slipperiness
 - **Brighter lighting:** This is useful in most cases
 - **Canes, walkers, etc.:** Used to provide support, prevent falls, reduce effort
 - **Hearing aids:** Useful for safety and communication
 - **Larger grips:** Reduces need for hand strength
 - **Lighter objects:** Reduces need for strength
 - **Long handled equipment:** Useful when reach or balance is limited
 - **Magnifying devices:** Used to make it easier to see
 - **Raised toilet seats:** Reduces amount of strength needed to raise and lower self)
 - **Safety treads:** Reduces floor slipperiness
 - **Shower (tub) seats:** Reduces need to move about in tub/shower
 - **Use wheels:** Reduces need for strength when lifting or carrying
5. **To reduce fatigue:** Assure rest breaks, but avoid immobility
6. **Eat well balanced meals:** The body needs good food for strength and energy
7. **Drink lots of water:** The body needs water for blood circulation