

Stay Safe in the Kitchen

- Carry hot drinks in a flask with a lid and a handle and don't fill mugs all the way.
- Move the items you use the most to accessible cupboards and areas.
- Use a light kettle and only boil the water you need.
- Perch on a high stool if you find it hard to stand.
- To aid your grip put foam around the handles of cutlery this works well on toothbrushes and pens too!
- Use a metal cooking basket e.g. when boiling vegetables. Lift and drain the cooking basket and content only. This eliminates lifting a heavy and hot pan.
- Don't rush - cut food slowly and take your time when moving hot pots and pans.
- Make sure you are wearing safe clothes too. Sleeves should not be long and flowy.

Useful Resources

Royal Collage of Occupational Therapists is a website where you can find a range of useful information on occupational therapy and its benefits.
www.rcot.co.uk

Hertfordshire Action on Disability (HAD) offer advice to disabled and elderly people on how to remain independent and on the move **www.hadnet.org.uk**
Tel: 01707 324581

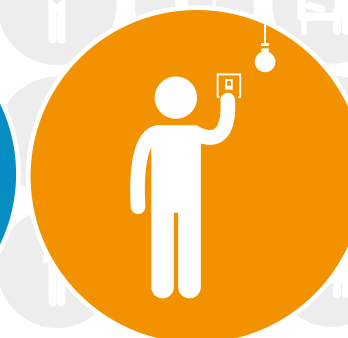
Adult Care Services is a department of Hertfordshire County Council where you can access advice on community care and help to remain independent.
www.hertsdirect.org/adults
Tel: 0300 123 40 42
Textphone: 0300 123 40 41

HertsHelp is a network of community organisations working together to help you find independent information and support to get the most out of life
www.hertshelp.net
Tel: 0300 123 4044
Textphone: 0300 456 23 64

There are online suppliers and community pharmacies and mobility shops where you will find a variety of gadgets and equipment to make your life easier.

Top Tips & Techniques from Occupational Therapists

For use in the home



Occupational Therapists help you to live your life your way by enabling you to participate in the activities (or occupations) that matter to you. Occupational therapy can significantly improve your independence, wellbeing and life satisfaction





Navigating Your Way

Walking

- Hold your stick in the opposite hand of your weaker leg or side.
- Wear supportive shoes with a good grip and easy fastening.

Furniture

Chairs

- Choose a firm chair with armrests that allows you to sit with your hips and knees at 90 degrees – bottom right back and feet flat on the floor. Put a cushion behind you if your chair is too deep.
- You can measure the right seat height for your chair by measuring the distance from the floor to the crease at the back of your knee.

Stairs

- Lead with your good leg on the way up, and with your bad leg on the way down.
- Ensure your stairs are well lit and clear of any clutter.

Bed

- It may be easier to turn on to your side before pushing up onto your elbows and arms into a sitting position.
- Use your good leg to hook under your weaker leg and lift them both onto the bed. Alternatively, shuffle back onto bed as far as you can go so that your legs follow.



Staying Independent

Toilet

- Avoid pulling yourself up on fixtures and fittings - try pushing from the toilet seat instead.
- Use a raised toilet seat to increase the height.
- Can you reach easily for a toilet roll or flush lever? Are your taps easy to use?

Bathroom

- When stepping in and out of the bath – remember stronger leg first!
- Use rubber mat with a good grip and avoid overreaching.
- Pump dispensers and long handled sponges can be handy.

Preventing falls

- Choose light coloured flooring, avoid rugs and threshold bars in doorways.
- Look out for trailing wires and mop up any spillages.

Lighting & Contrast

- Don't live your life in the dark – light up your home!
- Make sure you can reach the light switches and use contrasting colours to highlight more tricky areas.



Keep Things Simple

Too much to do in one go?

- Breakdown the task into simple steps and adapt the difficult parts to make it easier.

Are you overdoing it?

- Do things when you feel at your best, pace yourself and balance activity with rest.
- Don't stay in one position for too long – keep moving!

Jog your memory

- Use reminder lists and prompt sheets.

Choose Comfort and Convenience

- Choose easy care and loose clothing.
- Swap fiddly fasteners for Velcro and sew buttons on with elastic. Use front opening garments.
- Elasticated cufflinks and clip on tie is a must.

Trouble bending and reaching?

- Long handled shoe horn can make a difference.
- Use trousers with braces attached and put skirts over your head. It may be easier to put your underwear on lying flat on the bed.