

Cooking Tips

When a cook is blind or partially sighted, preparation, organization, planning, consistency, and safety are all necessary. Learning these skills will go a long way in reducing frustration.

Preparation, Organization, Planning, Consistency, Safety

Learn your personal environment/kitchen by asking family and/or friends to assist in locating important items in the kitchen.

- Placement of appliances (large and small)
- Outlets
- Cabinets/cupboards/pantry

Become familiar with local grocery stores/shopping list.

- Many stores have employees that assist with shopping.
- Prepare shopping list, prepare labels based on your shopping list.
- Get to know employees.
- Shop online or by phone and schedule pick up or delivery of groceries.
- Keep record of addresses and phone numbers.

Establish a place for each item, always keep items in the same place, and return items to designated places when you are finished.

- Plan where to keep specific items and be consistent.

Group similar items together and create a label system.

- Use different types of containers to store and label food items.
- You can use index cards with large print or Braille and secure them around the container with the use of a rubber band. You can use multiple rubber bands (ex. 1 for soup, 2 for vegetables, 3 for sauces). You can use baskets to separate/contain items. After product is consumed, the cards become a convenient shopping list.
- Store dry goods such as flour and sugar in different sized containers.
- Store frequently used objects in easy to reach locations and infrequently used items, such as a roaster for the holidays, in the back of the cabinet or in a higher shelf.
- Create a system (electronic or written) for organizing recipes and/or package directions.

Food Preparation

- Wash Hands.
- Organize/collect equipment and supplies before beginning each task so you have what is needed for that recipe. Remember to close all cabinet doors and cupboards to prevent injury.

- Pouring liquids
- Use your finger to align with edge of pot/pitcher, raise the container and move the edge over the container you are pouring into.
- The use of sounds, weight, feeling with index finger inside the edge (cold items only) and estimation times are all good cues to when the container is full.
- Use Braille, large print or color-coded measuring spoons/cups.
- Use cookie trays to prepare foods (chop/slice) to minimize spills or runaway foods. Grating foods can be done directly in a bowl. A damp cloth or non-slip mat can be used to prevent bowls/dishes from sliding away. (Mandoline 10 in 1 food slicer, chopper, etc)
- Take precautions when using knives.
- Keep your knuckles against your knife and cutting away from yourself is a good guide or use a lettuce knife.
- Place the knife across the top of your cutting surface when not in use.
- Always store your knives in the same place with the handles foremost to avoid any accidents.
- Spreading can be difficult.
- Practice using toast
- Use an organized pattern (left to right, top to bottom, center to outside).
- Use the back of a spoon vs a butter knife for easier spreading.
- With clean hands, you can touch the food to make sure that spreading is complete.

Cooking and Baking

- Orient and label the appliances.
- Orient self and label the stove while the stove is turned off. Practice placing pans on the burners, so that you become familiar with the cook top.
- Some appliance knobs and dials have tactile cues.
- File a notch, apply bump dots, drops of nail polish/glue to create tactile cues, if needed. Use minimal markings to keep it simple.
- Flat surface stoves may need a non-flammable marking to indicate the location of the burners. Some stoves have tactile contrast to indicate location of burners.
- Large print or Braille stickers can be used for labeling.
- Helpful Tips for the Kitchen
- Use a tactile or talking timer/thermometer.
- A timer can also be set using your cell phone or Amazon Echo.
- Be aware of clothing that you are wearing when working by the stove (roll up sleeves, loose garments) that could pose a hazard. Tie back long hair. Remove loose jewelry.
- Use back burners, rather than the front burners to avoid knocking the pans. Place pan on burner prior to starting. Turn burner off before removing the pan. Double check to ensure all stove dials are in the off position.
- Keep handles pointed away from the front of the stove and make sure handles and lids are heat resistant.
- Keep kitchen work surfaces clear of clutter.
- Make sure all oven racks are positioned correctly before turning on the oven.

- When removing items from the oven, use special long oven mitts (Oven glove) to protect your hands and upper arms, and prepare a place (use a hot pads on countertop, stovetop) where you are going to place the hot items
- The "George Foreman Grill" – portable cooking appliance can be used to cook a variety of meals.
- Allow at least 30 min. cooling time before cleaning surfaces.

Products For The Blind And Visually Impaired

There are many supply companies that offer a wide variety of products for blind and visually impaired people. Catalogs can be obtained by contacting:

Beyond Sight
 (303) 795-6455
www.beyondsight.com

Independent Living Aids
 1-800-537-2111
www.independentliving.com

Maxi Aids
 1-800-522-6294
www.maxiaids.com

L S and S Group
 1-800-468-4789
www.lssproducts.com

Sight Connection
 1-800-458-4888
www.sightconnection.com

Ann Morris Aids
 1-800-5237-2118
www.annmorris.com

APH
 1-502-895-2045
www.aph.org/products

The Lighthouse
 1-800-829-0500
www.lhb.org/content.php?fcn=store

Cookbooks/Websites

- [Braille Book Store](http://www.Braillebookstore.com/cookbooks) (www.Braillebookstore.com/cookbooks)
- [The Blind Cook](http://www.Theblindcook.com/tag/cookbook) (www.Theblindcook.com/tag/cookbook)

Beyond TV Dinners: Three Levels of Recipes for Visually Handicapped Cooks P. Canter, M. Cole, B. Hatlen, & P. LeDuc, (1975). Living Skills Center for the Visually Handicapped, 2444 Road 20, Apt. C-105, San Pablo, CA 94806. 201 pp.

This book offers a recipe package for students who need recipes geared to their cooking abilities. The three levels of cooking are directly related to the cooking evaluations that are included in the book.

Subjects Covered:

- Kitchen hints & gadgets
- Level I cooking evaluation & recipes (e.g., instant breakfast, frozen orange juice, baked bacon, baked potatoes)
- Level II cooking evaluation & recipes (e.g., Manwich sandwich, hamburgers, oven chuck roast, chicken and rice casserole, grilled cheese sandwiches)
- Level III cooking evaluation & recipes (e.g., spaghetti, baked meatballs, chili con carne, lasagna)

Easy To Use Recipes using the George Foreman Grill

“Potatoes on the Grill”

This recipe is truly unique to the George Foreman Grill and can't be duplicated. They come out like a cross between potato chips and French fries. Note: You can use any kind of potatoes but red potatoes come out delicious and are better for you.

1. Peel the potatoes and cut them into approximately 1/8 inch strips (You'll find your favorite thickness after you cook them a few times.)
2. Cover them with extra virgin olive oil or light olive oil.
3. Spread them across the grill and try not to overlap them too much. If you cut them a little thicker you'll fit more but you don't want to make them too thick. You can fit about 1 1/4 pounds on a family size grill.
4. Cook them for 25 to 30 minutes. Yes, that's a long time but they'll come out crispy and moist that way.

Grilled Cheese Sandwich

1. Get out the bread, cheese and a plate to set the sandwich on when you're done.
2. Plug in the George Foreman Grill.
3. Wait while the grill gets hot.
4. Butter one side of each piece of bread if you like to use butter. (This will be the side that is facing outward.)
5. Put the cheese between the bread with the non-buttered side touching the cheese.
6. Once grill is hot, open it up and put in the sandwich.
7. Check on the sandwich every few minutes so it won't burn.
8. When the sandwich is browned unplugs the grill and let it cool.
9. After a minute or so, take out sandwich, put it on a plate and dig in.
10. After eating your sandwich, sponge down the cooled grill.

Vary the breads and cheeses to make it more interesting. For example, try Pepper Jack cheese. You could also try adding fruits or veggies. How about the classic grilled cheese with tomatoes?

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