

Tips for the Kitchen

Although the principles outlined in the "Adapting Your Home" overview apply to every part of your living space, some rooms or areas require special attention. Here are a few simple things you can do to make kitchen chores easier and safer.

Label Canned Foods and Other Staples

Cans are often a source of great frustration for anyone with very limited vision. You usually can't tell what's in a can by shaking it. Once it's open, and turns out not to be what you expected, you can't close it up and store it for another time. At that point, you have two unsatisfactory choices—throw it away or eat something you don't feel like having. That's why it's essential to label cans the same day they arrive from the store, before you put them away. To do that you will need help from a neighbor or relative to identify what each one contains. Here are a few things you can do to minimize any inconvenience this might cause the person helping you.

- Do your shopping for food staples such as canned goods, cereal, crackers, dry pasta, spices, etc., (things that have a long shelf life) once or twice a month rather than weekly.
- Prepare labels in advance, based on your shopping list. A self-adhesive label is easy to apply, marked with whatever tactile "code" you devise or large print labeling.
- You could also use varying numbers of rubber bands to distinguish one type of product from another—two bands for mixed fruits; three for green vegetables; four for sauces; etc.

Other Kitchen Tips

- Wear short sleeves or roll your sleeves above the elbow when working at the stove.
- Wear oven mitts to handle pots and pans.
- Set a timer to remind you when to turn off the stove or other electrical appliances.
- Make sure all your appliances are in good working order and avoid overloading circuits.

- Don't store spices on a shelf above the stove.
- Don't remove a pan from the stove before you turn off the flame.
- Don't wear anything with long, loose sleeves when cooking.

Prescriptions for Independence,
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