

## **DATI Assistive Technology Facts**

### **Aids for Daily Living**

“There isn’t a person anywhere that isn’t capable of doing more than he thinks he can.”

- Henry Ford

#### **What is assistive technology?**

Assistive technology, or AT, is any tool that allows individuals with disabilities to use their own unique abilities to reach their goals. AT can range from low-cost tools such as a jar opener to more complex devices such as a power wheelchair or communication aid.

Infants, children, adults, and older persons with any type of disability can be aided by the use of AT.

#### **What is an aid for daily living?**

This type of AT device is any piece of equipment or adaptation that increases an individual’s participation or independence in daily activities such as eating and grooming as well as routine tasks such as getting out of bed and cooking dinner.

#### **Who is able to benefit from the use of daily living aids?**

These aids are probably the most widely used category of AT because almost everybody can benefit from them. Anyone who has ever used a gripper to open a stubborn jar lid has experienced the power of AT! A number of products originally designed for people with disabilities have been embraced by the public because they make completing a task easier and more comfortable.

#### **Where can I purchase aids for daily living?**

These devices can be found in drug stores, kitchen and hardware shops, and many other stores that you visit everyday. There are also specialty catalogs offering hundreds of clever tools and gadgets. These aids are easily accessible, usually do not require a prescription, and tend to be affordably priced.

## **What are some examples of AT devices for daily living?**

- Silverware with long, enlarged handles
- Shower bench
- Long handled hair brush and comb
- Dressing stick
- Reacher
- Medicine planner
- Weighted drinking glass
- Doorknob extension
- Bed rail

## **When are these products of most use?**

Daily living aids are used from the moment people wake up until the time they go to bed. In the morning, the use of a bed rail provides support as a person gets up from a lying down or seated position. Lunch may include the use of large handled utensils so that gripping the silverware is easier. In the evening, the zipper pull helps in getting dressed for a night out with friends. The book holder keeps reading material open and at a comfortable distance. And as the last lights are turned out at night, a large lamp switch makes that once difficult task simple.

## **Is it possible to create my own aids for daily living?**

Absolutely. Many commercial aids can be reproduced at home with minimum difficulties. For example, a length of rubber tubing slipped over a utensils handle may make it easier or more comfortable for someone with limited grip to hold. Also, items created for one task can sometimes be adapted and used for another.

## **What are some questions to ask when shopping for daily living aids?**

- What activity am I trying to make easier?
- What am I able to do?
- Will this product work for me?
- Does this product perform the function intended?
- Will I need assistance to use this AT device?
- Will rearranging my environment eliminate the need for this daily living aid?



**Good Grips Button Hook** has a built up handle that features flexible ribbing to adapt to any grip.



**Dynamic Living's Ulu Knife** is a rocker knife that increases dexterity and leverage, making fine cuts simple and chopping easier.



This **Bath+Safe Adjustable Shower Seat** has a removable back and arms to assist in sitting or standing.



**Easie Eaters Curved Utensils by Milestones** are lightweight and easy to grip. They are angled to promote success with hand-to-mouth feeding.



**Book Butler's Book Holder** features two spring-loaded arms that open automatically and lock to hold a book flat. Pages slip easily from one arm to the other.

**DATI fact sheets are available on the following topics:**

- Adapted Toys
- Aids for Daily Living
- Aids for Low Vision
- Assistive Listening Devices
- Augmentative and Alternative Communication
- Computer Access
- Seating, Positioning and Mobility
- Switches and Environmental Control Units
- Tools for Learning

## **Delaware Assistive Technology Initiative**

Center for Applied Science & Engineering

University of Delaware/Alfred I. duPont Hospital for Children

PO Box 269, 1600 Rockland Road

Wilmington, DE 19899-0269

1(800) 870-DATI or (302) 651-6790

TDD: (302) 651-6794

FAX: (302) 651-6793

[dati@asel.udel.edu](mailto:dati@asel.udel.edu)

[www.dati.org](http://www.dati.org)