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Independent Living with Low Vision: Household Tips for the Visually Impaired



Photo courtesy of Pixabay by [Gregory Butler](#)

Some people are born with blindness, low vision or other visual impairments. Others gradually develop vision issues as they age. And for some, their visual impairments were the result of an accident or injury. Whatever the case may be, low vision or blindness don't have to mean a loss of independence. As you will see, it is very possible to live an empowered, happy and healthy life despite visual impairment. Many people around the world are already experiencing this freedom each and every day. Read on for some of our favorite tips.

A [study](#) by the Center for Disease Control (CDC) has shown that the visually impaired are at a greater risk for falls and fractures than the general population. Don't worry; that doesn't mean you're doomed to become another statistic just because you have low vision or blindness. Although accidents and injuries can happen to anyone - including those with perfect vision - there are some [things we can do](#) to reduce the chances of hurting ourselves. First, consider the use of a cane or walking stick. They are affordable ways to improve mobility and accessibility, and can help you increase your rate of fall prevention.

Those who have low vision rather than full blindness may also benefit from the use of telescopic lenses, bioptic vision aids and other low vision optic devices. These devices work by helping enhance the vision in visually impaired individuals who have low vision rather than full blindness. One of the most easily obtained and useful devices is a magnifier, which can greatly assist with short distance vision. This makes it easier to partake in activities such as reading, writing, paying bills, watching television, household activities, and performing certain hobbies. The next step beyond magnifiers would be prescription telescopic glasses, which have special lenses to assist with longer distance vision for everyday living.

Reducing clutter, keeping everything organized and in its place, and making sure furniture never blocks doorways or walking paths is important in any home - especially in homes that are occupied by or frequently visited by the visually impaired. Make sure if you use a [house cleaning service](#) that they understand these needs. For those who like to cook, consider purchasing a cutting board with an attached pivot knife. These fairly inexpensive devices can reduce the risk of accidents and injuries in the kitchen, saving money (and stress!) on unnecessary medical bills. If you're unable to find a cutting board with a pivot knife, you can also try using a pizza cutter instead of a knife to reduce the risk of injuries. To make cooking and baking easier, measuring cups with raised markings can be purchased to help distinguish measurements without having to rely solely on vision. A great tip from [Vision Aware](#) is to measure spices and other ingredients into the palm of your hand first, bypassing the need for measuring cups and spoons altogether.

And of course, when it comes to everyday living with low vision, tactile reminders throughout the house are incredibly helpful and important. If there are multiple inhabitants of the house who share the same bathroom, tie a rubber band to the visually impaired person's toothbrush so they can easily find it without confusion. Rubber bands or velcro can also be used to mark specific items in the home. Rubber bands can be placed on all cans of vegetables to distinguish them from cans of fruit, for instance. Meanwhile, velcro can be placed on the door of a cabinet that contains favorite cereals and other frequently eaten food items.

These simple household tips are low-cost, easy solutions that can have profound improvements upon the quality of life and independence for those with visual impairments. Hopefully this article has given you some helpful tips that you can immediately apply to your daily lifestyle so you can stay focused on living -- and thriving.

Editor's note: The opinion expressed in this writing is solely of the author and does not reflect in any way of BCNH. Jackie can be reached at: jackie@hyper-tidy.com