Stroke Survivor Shortcuts for Everyday Living

Available at: www.chsc.org/speakeasy

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Bathrooms

Shower transport Use a transport wheelchair or shower seat (cut shower curtain to fit inside shower seat).
Getting in and out Use poles, grab bars, stair rails.
Gripping Use plumber’s pipe insulation.
Brushing teeth Use an electric toothbrush, can put toothpaste on it.
Bathroom accessibility Install a drop-down bathroom bar, poles, stair railing, or bars.
Bathroom remodeling Snow Brothers specializes in handicap bathrooms.

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**Car**

Get in and out of the car  Use plastic sheet, table cloth, garbage bag, or shower curtain to help you slide.

To close passenger side door  We constructed a wooden arm to reach to the door.

Emergency bathroom stop for men  Open passenger door and back-door on passenger side, park in isolated area, and assist survivor to put his feet outside.


**Computer**

Can’t see computer keyboard keys  [www.Bungalow.com](http://www.Bungalow.com) sells large letter computer key pads.

Can’t remember alphabets on keyboard  Specialized keyboards are available.

Trouble with mouse  Try a track ball or carpal tunnel mouse (Micro Center).

**Clothing**

General  Buy one size bigger with loose arms so survivors can dress themselves and dress stress free.

Socks for knee-high plastic brace  Use knee-high rugby socks (comes in summer and winter weight) and protects against skin break-outs.

Transfers  Use nylon basketball shorts or jogging pants. Use satin pj’s.

Bib  Use a Chef’s or Bar-B-Q apron.

Support socks  Use specially made plastic gloves to slide them on—do not roll like hose. If the survivor cannot put them on by themselves, it is easier to put them on while the survivor is lying down.

T-Shirts  Put weak arm in shirt and pull to shoulder, put strong arm through shirt, then gather in the front and put over your head and pull down.

Coats/Sweaters  Lace weak arm and pull up to shoulder then let survivor put strong arm down into the sleeve.

Shoes  Leimkuehlerinc (3 offices in Cleveland metro area, see [www.Leimkuehlerinc.com](http://www.Leimkuehlerinc.com)) will put Velcro enclosures on any shoe.
Exercise Equipment

Exercises
Put exercise equipment, books, and computers in the living room and on the dining room table. Proximity is everything. Encourage walking around periodically. If possible, join an exercise group: Curves, Break-Out Fitness (fitness group for seniors and persons with disabilities at Euclid Hospital), etc. to take advantage of a support group.

Swimming Shoes
Supportive water shoes from Maui Surf. They are available on the Web. These shoes can accommodate a brace.

Chair Lift/Stair Lifts

Chair lift
A chair lift can assist the survivor to stand reliably or transfer to a wheel chair. Independence is important to both the survivor and the spouse. However, the best exercise for walking is unassisted standing up. The muscles used to walk are turned on when standing up. Use the “lift” mechanism to encourage independence and when stronger, do not use.

Stair lifts
External or internal stair lifts are available through MC Mobility http://www.mcmobilitysystems.com/ in Mentor and other companies.

Chair or Wheel Chair

Sling for your arm
Larry uses bolster pillow taped or Velcro to wheel chair

Keep people from sliding
Uses rubberized shelf liner or Dycem on chair

Break on a wheel chair
Don made an extension for the break.

Maintain your wheelchair
Call Millers Adaptive Technology Service Dept for Cleveland: 216-642-1447 ext 16331 http://www.millersadaptive.com/

Rent a ramp
Several companies will set-up a ramp system for rental or purchase.

No experience with these companies, add rent a ramp to your Web browser.
**Eating and Cooking**

- **Plastic rims for plates**: We bought a plastic rim and sand top to hold a knife.
- **Bowls**: Use collapsible bowl (scoop dish) with Velcro.
- **Keep plates from sliding**: Use rubberized shelf liner or Dycem for place mat.
- **Cutting board**: Order from [www.ActiveForever.com](http://www.ActiveForever.com) (Order over the phone, not on Web. Their Web pages are not secure and do not close—the website is being hacked.)
- **Silverware**: Order large handle, bendable silverware or plastic foam handles through [www.ActiveForever.com](http://www.ActiveForever.com) or [http://www.pattersonmedical.com/](http://www.pattersonmedical.com/). Larry uses pipe fitting insulation or wrap in a face cloth and tape.
- **No spill cups**: Use travel cups with rubber bottoms.
- **Shopping scooters**: Shopping scooters are great but often cannot turn easily to go up and down adjacent aisles. We suggest skipping an aisle—go down every other aisle.

**Stationary, Office Supplies**

- **For holding the paper while writing**: Dycem
- **Left handed scissors**: Lowes large utility scissors for few dollars or order spring loaded scissors from Active Forever [www.ActiveForever.com](http://www.ActiveForever.com) or Sammons and Preston [http://www.pattersonmedical.com/](http://www.pattersonmedical.com/)
- **Holder for playing cards**: We made a holder for playing cards or order on Web.
- **Low vision aides**: View and order low vision aides through the Cleveland Sight Center [http://www.clevelandsightcenter.org/](http://www.clevelandsightcenter.org/) or 216-791-8118.
**Thresholds**

Threshold ramp  
We put door molding at Lowes or uses old base board.

Portable threshold ramps  
Ramps fit through one-step doorways and curbs, fits in trunk, you can order over the Web or go to the [www.brunnerhealthcare.com](http://www.brunnerhealthcare.com) in Mentor to view ramp styles. Use the rule, buy one foot in length for every one inch rise (for example, buy a 3 foot ramp for a 3 inch threshold).

Door/Entry way  
Don puts a grab-bar or large drawer handle inside door frame and/or place a heavy piece of furniture near step.

Widen a Doorway  
Use Offset Door Hinges that will add at least 2 inches to a door way. Example is: [http://www.adaptiveaccess.com/offset_hinges.php](http://www.adaptiveaccess.com/offset_hinges.php)

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**Adult Aphasia Resources**

First attempt to read  

Reading/Writing books  
English as a second language section of book stores

Dictionary  
Oxford Monolingual Dictionaries ([oxford.com](http://www.oxford.com))

Learning the key board  
We created a list of (CD’s, DVD’s, favorite books, grocery lists). Use software to teach the key board.

Learning to write sentences  
We keeps a diary in Excel (columns are labeled Subject, Verb, and Object)

Working on memory  
Take any 3 or 4 words, like: “the brown box” or “I want ice tea.” See them, say them, write them. Next say and write them backwards. Say and write them forwards from memory. Say and write them in alphabetical order, then in reverse alphabetical order. Say and write them in order of length of word, then reverse word length.
Adult Aphasia Resources Continued.

Working on Numbers (math)  Practice cooking (measuring ingredients), playing cards, paying the bill, making change, planning travel, counting during exercises, sing-song it. Spell numbers out: for example, symbols (7) are much harder than words (seven).

Learning alphabets/sounds  Repetition using all the senses (hear a letter/word, see it, say it, use it in a sentence, write/type it, repeat). Do two or three different words then review all three words. Expect errors, point it out, and move on. Errors show effort and new pathways and are the best part of learning, don’t make a big deal of it. “Good job, almost, (or just forgot a __, or see this is what it should look like, or try it again,) now let’s move on.” The less comment you make on errors the more self-confidence and willingness to risk-take, expect 50 to 80 percent errors, on a new exercise.)

Change concentration/focus  Practice changing the subject. “Let’s talk about cars.” After a few minutes say, “Now let’s talk about food.” After a few minutes switch back, “Now what were we saying about cars?” When the survivor has trouble switching gears, just say now we’re just practicing changing focus, OK? No big deal. “What kind of car do you drive?” If they respond with a food name, just say “I think that’s held over from the last conversation. Repeat after me, I drive a (pause).”

Community Resources  No one makes it through alone. JOIN GROUPS. We recommend the Cleveland Hearing and Speech Center’s Speak Easy Group www.chsc.org/speakeasy, Cleveland Stroke Club www.clevelandstrokeclub.wordpress.com, and Euclid Hospital’s Break-Out Fitness http://totallytonedpersonaltraining.com/northeast-oh-post-rehab-fitness.htm. For more community resource information, go to the Cleveland Hearing and Speech Center’s website: www.chsc.org/speakeasy. There is an up-to-date community resource guide, a paper on how to work with the health care system in Cleveland, and this Tips list written by caregivers. There is also a newsletter written for and by stroke survivors.