

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.

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.
Car adaptations, handicap rentals	http://www.mcmobilitysystems.com/

Computer

Can't see computer keyboard keys	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) 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 (Order over the phone, not on Web. Their Web pages are not secure and do not close—the website is being hacked.)

One-handed table knife

Buy a rocker knife at www.ActiveForever.com or

Silverware

Order large handle, bendable silverware or plastic foam handles through www.ActiveForever.com or <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 or Sammons and Preston <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/> 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 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

Adult Aphasia Resources

First attempt to read	Chose a favorite book (comic book, cook book, children's book, bible, poem, words of a song—pleasurable reading with a known plot), so the effort of following the words across lines is outweighed by the pleasure of holding the book. You can also use a book with a book on tape or an electronic book or PC with free software (http://www.readplease.com or http://www.naturalreaders.com/). The Cleveland Sight Center will create a book on tape free of charge for stroke survivors.
Reading/Writing books	English as a second language section of book stores
Dictionary	Oxford Monolingual Dictionaries (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.