

The kitchen and dining room often present challenges to individuals with disabilities. From access issues to the use of appliances and cooking aides, efforts can often be daunting and even risky at times. Thankfully there are a large number of accommodations available in the form of adaptive equipment, adaptive design and strategies. Generally, to be used independently the kitchen and dining room area need not be particularly large, but must be carefully designed. Careful planning must be done to provide appropriate floor space for the counters, sink, cabinets, and appliances.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

Are there any cooking and food preparation products on the market that offer greater access for people with limited function and range of motion?

- *There are quite a number of items on the market, from a device to hold a bagel in place for slicing to a steel frame that holds a pot in place over a stove burner. In the way of dining there are special utensils with extra large handles for easier gripping. In addition, there are dishes available with non-slip bottoms, which prevent the dish or glass from sliding across the table.*



Bagel Slicer



Pot and Pan Holder

Tech Connections is a collaborative project of the United Cerebral Palsy Associations, the Center for Assistive Technology and Environmental Access (formerly CRT) at the Georgia Institute of Technology, and the Southeast Disability and Business Technical Assistance Center.

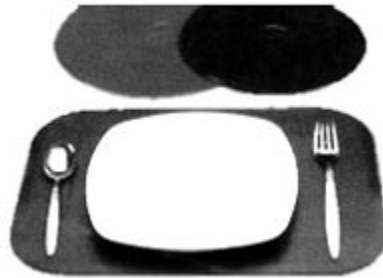
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What are some products that can provide increased independence in dining?

- *In the way of dining there are special utensils with extra large handles for easier gripping.*



Large handle utensils



Non-slip pad

Are there accessible floor plans available that offer greater independence in the kitchen?

- *Yes, a number of [floor plans](#) can be found in books and on the web that are focused on accessible home building and remodeling. In addition to those sited here, a great source for these books is www.Amazon.com.*

Are there any off the shelf products that can make cooking and food preparation more accessible?

- *Yes, there are quite a few products in the mainstream marketplace that can make cooking and preparing food more accessible. Some products used are the [Good Grips](#) brand cooking tools due to the extra large handles, and grills like the [Foreman Grills](#) are very useful due to downward slop and non-use of fire to grill. The downward slope allows the consumer to slide the food off the grill and directly onto the plate. Another good product in the mainstream marketplace is the electric knife. The electric knife assist in cutting raw meats, poultry and vegetables. A universal design can opener like the [Gizmo](#) by Black & Decker is a great off the shelf product opening canned foods with very little effort. Automatic wine bottle openers are available as well. These generally attach to a wall or table and have a large leverage handle that you pull down and automatically pull the cork out.*

What can I do to make my existing kitchen more accessible?

The following modifications can be easily and inexpensively incorporated into existing kitchens to make them more accessible.

- **Add Storage Bins**

The addition of pullout storage bins to shelves and cabinets can help make existing storage space accessible.

- **Lower Existing Cabinets**

Existing overhead cabinets can be lowered down as far as the top surface of existing counters if necessary. This provides accessible storage at minimal cost. Cabinets lowered to 12 to 15 inches above the counters, keep the counter surface usable.

- **Add a free standing storage cabinet**

If floor space is available, a freestanding storage cabinet can provide accessible storage space.

Are there any accessible dishwashers on the market or points of thought when selecting a dishwasher?

Location

The dishwasher should be located so it is accessible from either side. It should be raised off the floor 6 to 8 inches. A [counter top dishwasher](#) is also a very good option and can be placed just about anywhere.

Controls

Controls for the dishwasher are designed to require little force, and do not require gripping, twisting or fine finger dexterity.

Lever handle or Blade control knob

These are excellent controls for setting different wash cycles but touch pads are better for disabled individuals with loss of finger mobility and strength.

Electronic touch pad controls

These are the best controls for degraded finger/hand mobility and strength but can be confusing for multiple inputs for the dishwasher.

Rolling Table

This item is helpful for loading and unloading the dishwasher. It should be counter top height with handles for ease of mobility.

Alternative Design

If space is a concern, compact dishwashers are available on the market that fit on top of a countertop with the following dimensions: 19.5" high X 21.5" wide X 22.5" deep. These have the standard drop down doors with rollout baskets.

Features

Drop down front door

Most standard washers are equipped with drop down doors. As an added feature, grip handles are a nice feature for both inside and outside the dishwasher, for ease of opening and closing the dishwasher door.

Roll out basket

Most standard washers are also equipped with this feature so this shouldn't be an addition to an adaptive dishwasher design.

OTHER INFORMATION RESOURCES:

PRODUCT LINKS:

Kalamazoo Grill

http://www.kalamazoogrill.com/enabled/enabled_pr.html

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