



ABLEDATA Database of Assistive Technology

Assistive Devices for People with Arthritis

ABLEDATA Fact Sheet

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Introduction

If you have arthritis, assistive devices can make your life easier. An assistive device can be anything from a little gadget that helps you open flip-top cans to a three-wheeled scooter to help you get around. Devices can alleviate pain and stress on joints, conserve energy, and help maintain independence. Devices can make it easier to do the many little things that arthritis makes difficult: dressing, opening doors, turning on faucets. But selecting the right device can be difficult unless you know what devices exist to address a problem, where to obtain them, and how to go about selecting the one that's right for you.

This guide introduces you to resources that will help you become more aware of what devices are available, how they can address your problems, and how to choose among them. The guide includes books and articles on self-care from the National Rehabilitation Information Center (NARIC) collection, listings of free catalogs that feature assistive devices, and a checklist to help you use the ABLEDATA database to match your needs with lists of available products.

Please note: These resources should supplement, not replace, advice from your doctor or other medical professional regarding which devices are safe and effective for your needs. A medical professional familiar with your condition can help you choose devices suited to you, and can show you how to use them safely.

Books and Articles

While one of NARIC's services is document delivery, copyright law prevents them from photocopying some of the documents listed below; in this case you may be able to find them in your local library, or the local library may be able to get them through the inter-library loan program. Also, additional information has been provided for books that are available by special order from book stores or their publisher.

Guide to Independent Living for People with Arthritis.

Author/Publisher: Arthritis Foundation. 420 p. Available from the Bulk Order Department, Arthritis Foundation, 1314 Spring Street NW, Atlanta, GA 30309. \$9.95. Also available from local AF chapters; prices many vary from chapter to chapter.

Contains ideas for doing many daily activities in ways that can help protect joints and reduce fatigue. Illustrates and describes more than 600 specific aids for daily living and lists more than 530 product resources.

Information for Independence

"Arthritis Self-Management". *Continuing Care Healthwatch*, Vol. 1, No. 10, July 1985, p. 26-36. NARIC accession number: XJ3127.

Contains information about arthritic ailments and their therapies. Explains good habits and exercises that ease the effects of arthritis. Advocates a policy of self-management so people with arthritis can have some control over their treatment. Includes a definition of arthritis and charts characteristics of osteoarthritis and rheumatoid arthritis. Describes and pictures exercises and correct methods of performing some daily activities. Lists unproven arthritis remedies, and gives hints and aids for housekeeping, comfort, bathing and hygiene, joint protection, and energy conservation.

"Arthritis and Self-Care: The Patient's Role in Disease Management". *Caring*, Vol. 8, No. 1., 1989. pp. 18-22, 24-25. NARIC accession number: XJ10556.

Discusses aspects of arthritis self-care such as getting enough of the right kind of rest, proper nutrition, and exercise; pacing activities to conserve energy; and learning to protect joints through respecting pain, becoming aware of body positions, controlling weight, avoiding the holding of one position for too long, using assistive devices, and using the strongest joints and muscles.

Arthritis Helpbook: What You Can Do For Your Arthritis, 3rd Ed. Lorig, K., and Fries, J. F. Reading, Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley, 1990. 200 p. Available from Addison-Wesley, at 800/447-2226; upon connecting, people calling from a touch-tone phone can press "3" for faster service. \$10.53.

This book contains information designed to help people with arthritis change their activities and abilities, decrease their pain, and develop confidence in their ability to care for themselves. It discusses the benefits of exercise and describes and illustrates stretching or range-of-motion exercises and strengthening exercises. Other topics include hints and aids for daily living, minimizing joint stress and pain, maintaining joint mobility and function, conserving energy, relaxation techniques, sleeping, depression, diets and nutrition, specific medications for reducing inflammation and reducing pain, and choosing and communicating with a doctor. Lists local chapters of the Arthritis Foundation. Includes drawings, photo-graphs, bibliography, and an index.

Product Comparison and Evaluation: Scooters, June 1991.

Author/publisher: REquest Rehabilitation Engineering Center on the Evaluation of Assistive Technology, National Rehabilitation Hospital, DC, 1991. 91 p. Available from the publisher at the Rehabilitation Engineering Center, National Rehabilitation Hospital, 102 Irving Street, NW, Washington, DC 20010-2949. 202/877-1932. \$10. Also available through NARIC; NARIC accession number: XO10168.

Product comparison and evaluation report on currently available motorized scooters. Forty-five different scooter models are included in the product comparison. Seventeen models tested for controls, performance, safety, and ease of use are included in the evaluation. The report is organized into the following sections: 1) introduction; 2) selecting an appropriate scooter; 3) scooter characteristics, features, and options; 4) adjusting to a new scooter; 5) product comparison charts; 6) tips on being an educated consumer; 7) tips

for safe scooter use; 8) maintenance and repair tips; 9) tips for a long healthy scooter life; 10) related devices; 11) modifications and adaptations; 12) description of units tested in the evaluation; 13) product evaluation summaries; and 14) evaluation criteria, test methods, and results.

Product Comparison and Evaluation: Canes, Crutches, and Walkers, June 1990. Author/publisher: REquest Rehabilitation Engineering Center, National Rehabilitation Hospital, DC, 1990. 117 p. Available from the publisher at the Rehabilitation Engineering Center, National Rehabilitation Hospital, 102 Irving Street, NW, Washington, DC 20010-2949. 202/877-1932. \$10. Also available through NARIC. NARIC accession number: XO09646.

Report from a product comparison and evaluation of canes, crutches, and walkers. The report discusses the use and selection of ambulation aids from the perspectives of a physical therapist and a physician. It then reviews technical aspects of ambulation aids, reported problems, and considerations for proper fitting, safety, and product selection. Charts are provided comparing features of specific products. The last section presents findings from the evaluation of 67 cane, crutch, and walker models from 7 manufacturers. It includes descriptions of the testing methodology and evaluation criteria as well as results, conclusions, and acceptability ratings of the various models.

Eighty-Eight Easy-To-Make Aids for Older People and for Special Needs. Caston, D. Point Roberts, WA: Hartley and Marks, Inc., 1988. 179 p. Available by request from bookstores, or directly from Hartley and Marks, 206/945-2017. \$12.95, plus \$2 shipping and handling.

A woodworking project guide, for devices designed to assist in daily living. The introduction discusses basic carpentry, i.e., types and purchasing of materials, tools, and construction methods. The book describes how to make 88 different aids, divided up into those useful in the kitchen, dining room/living room, bedroom, bathroom, entry-ways, stairs/landing, outside the house, and in the garden. There is also a section on carts and walkers for moving from place to place. Where appropriate the description of each device includes a materials shopping list, instructions, and drawings. An appendix discusses handrails and grab bars for bathrooms.

The Illustrated Directory of Handicapped Products, 1991-1992. Behzad, M. S., Ed. Lawrence, KS: Trio Publications, Inc., 1991. 306 p. Available from the publisher at 3600 West Timber Court, Lawrence, KS 66049. \$12.95 (Sent at 4th class postage rate; add \$3 for faster delivery, by UPS).

This directory covers a wide range of products for people with disabilities, with the intent of helping people locate products they need and give them a wide selection of products for comparison. Products are described in entries of 50-100 words, and most entries include black and white photos or drawings of the products. Each of 20 sections provides separate entries about a product category, then an alphabetical list of companies is listed for people interested in getting more information about the product.

The First Whole Rehab Catalog. A Comprehensive Guide to Products and Services for the Physically Disadvantaged. Abrams, A. J.; Abrams, M. A. Crozet, VA: Betterway Publications, Inc., 1990. 240 p. Available from the

publisher at P.O. Box 219, Crozet, VA 22932. \$16.95.

Presents information on products and services for people with disabilities. The book is divided into 12 sections. Entries include 50-100 word product descriptions, and most entries have black and white photos or illustrations. The appendix lists information resources, including legal resources, protection and advocacy organizations, amputee support groups, and magazines/newsletters.

Accent on Living: Buyer's Guide, 1992-93 Edition. Garee, B., Editor; compiled by Foran, D. Bloomington, IL: Cheever Publishing, Inc., 1992. 142 p. Available from Accent on Living, P.O. Box 700, Bloomington, IL 61702. 309/378-2961. \$12, plus \$1.25 for shipping.

Guide to a variety of products, devices, and services for people with disabilities. As with the two above books, it is organized by product category; however, the focus is a bit different in that product descriptions are not given, and each of 32 different categories includes listings of publications, films, and cassettes pertaining to that topic. The guide also provides lists of services/organizations, and local dealers. An alphabetized index of products is included.

Mail Order Catalogs for Assistive Devices/Products

The following catalogs featuring assistive devices, are free and are from companies that sell directly to consumers. Examples of products sold would be those which help with activities of daily living (ADL), such as dressing, eating, gardening, and housekeeping.

Maddak, Inc. Catalog. Maddak, Inc. Pequannock, New Jersey 07440-1993. 800/443-4926. Aids for daily living, home health care, and rehabilitation.

Sammons Preston Catalogs, P.O. Box 5071, Bolingbrook, IL 60440-5071; 800/323-5547, 800/547-4333 Fax.

Accessories to Daily Living. The Swedish Rehab product line. LUMEX/Swedish Rehab, 100 Spence Street, Bay Shore, NY 11706. 800/645-5272. 516/273-2200.

AdaptAbility: Products for Independent Living 1992. AdaptAbility, P.O. Box 515, Colchester, CT 06415-0515. 800/243-9232.

North Coast Medical AfterTherapy Catalog. Distributed by Access to Recreation, Inc., 2509 East Thousand Oaks Boulevard, Suite 430, Thousand Oaks, CA 91362. 800/634-4351.

Can-Do Products For Your Active Independent Life. Independent Living Aids, Inc. 27 East Mall, Plainview, NY 11803. 800/537-2118.

Maxi-Aids Aids and Appliances for the Blind, Visually Impaired, Physically Disabled, Hearing Impaired, and Senior Citizens with Special Needs. Maxi-Aids Inc., 42 Executive Blvd., P.O. Box 3209 Farmingdale, NY 11735. 800/522-6294; 516/752-0521.

Access with Ease. Access with Ease, Inc., P.O. Box 1150, Chino Valley, AZ 86323. 602/636-9469. \$1; free for people who say they saw it mentioned here in the ABLEDATA Fact Sheet.

Assistive Device Identification Worksheet

We have received many calls asking for a list of all the devices that assist people with arthritis. However, given the size and scope of our database, this request would generate a long list of products, many of which may not be useful to you. To avoid "information overload," please use the following worksheet to help you determine what types of products may benefit you.

The worksheet asks questions about "activities of daily living," or ADLs, like picking things up, holding things for a period of time, getting dressed, etc. Each activity that you do "with difficulty" or "not without help/not at all," is followed by several words that our staff can use to locate information about products that will assist you. If you contact us for the list of devices, please mention the worksheet and the search words you found helpful.

In addition to assistive devices, the ABLEDATA database also includes listings of therapeutic devices, such as paraffin warmers, should your medical advisor suggest that you purchase such a device.

ABLEDATA fee schedule: zero - 50 citations: \$5. 51-100 citations: \$10; each additional 100 citations: \$5.

Grasping

Can you grasp and use such objects as eating utensils, keys, writing utensils, brushes, razors, makeup applicators, faucets, doorknobs, etc?

___ Yes, without difficulty
Go to next question

___ Yes, with difficulty
Search: Home management, items with built up handles, razor and makeup holders, door handles, door locks, holding, food preparation, house-keeping, writing tools, writing aid, plumbing accessories, gardening handtools, scissors, telephone dialing and reception accessories

___ No, not without help/Not at all
Search: home management, feeders, feeding programs, voice activated telephone, speakerphone, telephone headset, typewriters, typing stick, remote control typing system

Holding

Can you hold items such as drinking containers, telephone receivers, jars?

___ Yes, without difficulty
Go to next question

___ Yes, with difficulty
Search: Home management, items for holding, dispenser aids

Dressing

Can you dress yourself, do buttons, lace shoes, work zippers?

___ Yes, without difficulty
Go to next question

___ Yes, with difficulty
Search: Shoe aids, stocking aids, button aids, zipper pull, dressing stick, lacing board, watch winder

Reaching

Can you reach objects that are above you?

___ Yes, without difficulty
Go to next question

___ Yes, with difficulty
Search: Reaching, reachers, tongs

Carrying

Can you carry objects?

___ Yes, without difficulty
Go to next question

___ Yes, with difficulty
Search: Carrying general, wheelchair carrying, walker carrying, crutch carrying, shopping

Sitting and Standing Up

Can you raise yourself from a sitting position without the use of your arms?

___ Yes, without difficulty
Go to next question

___ Yes, with difficulty
Search: Commodes, toilets, seating systems general, positioning seats general, adjustable chair, chair with descending seat, seat lift chair, work chairs

Navigating Stairs

Can you go up and down stairs?

Yes, without difficulty
Go to next question

Yes, with difficulty
Search: Canes, stair walker

No, not at all
Search: Stair lifts, elevators, ramps

Walking

Can you walk on flat ground or stand on your own?

Yes, without difficulty
Go to next question

Yes, with difficulty
Search: Mobility, canes, crutches general, walkers, prone standers, wheelchair alternatives

Not without help/Not at all
Search: Mobility, other standing equipment

Driving

Can you drive a car and manipulate vehicle controls?

Yes, without difficulty
Go to next question

Yes, with difficulty
Search: Driving controls, gas cap opener, power window control, turn signal and light controls, swivel seat, car door opener, car door reacher

Not without help/Not at all
Search: Driving controls, automobile accessories, van accessories, wheelchair carriers, vehicles

About This Document

This document is available in several forms: as an electronic text file (this document), on disk, on cassette, in braille, and in printed form (both in large print and formatted with a desktop publishing program). This guide is part of a series of resource guides produced by ABLEDATA.

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The ABLEDATA staff invite your comments and recommendations on this resource guide; corrections, information about publications and resource information that is not included here, and other suggestions are welcome.

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