With One Arm
Special Techniques, Tools and Equipment to Fit Your Needs

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The person with the use of one arm can adopt special work methods and adapted tools and equipment to make homemaking tasks easier. People with one arm from birth or as a result of accident or disease can learn to do almost all household tasks with the help of special techniques and devices. Suggestions for these techniques and devices that are helpful are included in this guide. Use these ideas to devise your own equipment and methods—find a way that works best for you.

People with the use of one arm as a result of a stroke have additional limitations. They may have difficulty remembering how to perform simple tasks that they have done for years. Speech or hearing problems, limited peripheral vision, impaired judgment, and lack of arm and leg control may also result from stroke. A stroke will affect each person differently. Therefore, adjustments must be made for each individual.

Memory problems. To help overcome problems caused by impaired memory we suggest the following:

- Plan each task carefully.
- Write things down. Use a chalk board, bulletin board, or magnets on metal surfaces to fasten notes.
- Plan easy meals.
- Use convenience foods.
- Assemble all ingredients, tools and equipment before starting preparation.
- Set a timer when food is cooking on the range or baking in the oven.
- Keep storage areas neat with each item in its place to avoid having to search for an item.
- Label cabinets and containers.

Special Tools, Devices, and Equipment

Some adapted equipment and special devices will make tasks easier. Choose items carefully. Buy equipment which will help you to overcome the limitations imposed by your disability and enable you to function more efficiently. All equipment should be as versatile, durable, and easy to clean. Consider the amount and location of necessary storage space.

The last page of this publication lists some sources where these items may be purchased. Send for catalogs and current prices before ordering.

Nail Board

Fruits, vegetables, meats, and other foods can be peeled, sliced, or chopped easily with one hand by securing the food on a nail board.

This versatile aid can be purchased (see sources 1, 2, and 3), or made by anyone with basic carpenter tools and skills.

To construct, use a wooden cutting board and aluminum or stainless steel nails (to prevent rust-
Nail board

Drill two holes slightly smaller than the nails to be inserted, and 1 to 1 1/2 inches apart as shown.

A 1/2 x 1/4 or 1/2 x 1/2 inch wood edging may be nailed around one corner to form a raised edge to stabilize bread or toast for buttering or making sandwiches.

Screw-on suction cups can be attached under each corner to prevent the board from sliding during use. A damp sponge cloth may be used instead of suction cups. Sponge cloths are absorbent and easy to clean. They may be purchased at grocery, hardware, and variety stores.

Place a piece of waxed paper or a paper towel down over the nails before preparing the food to make clean-up easier.

It is wise to use two cork stoppers or a sponge to place over the nails when not in use to avoid possible skin punctures.

Peeler

A floating blade peeler is safer and easier to use for most fruits and vegetables than a knife.

Bowl Holders

A bowl holder grips a bowl firmly while batters, heavy doughs, and other foods are prepared. Notches at the sides hold the bowl on its side while the finished batter or food is scraped into the prepared pan underneath.

To construct, use 3 pieces of 1/2 inch plywood (10 x 12; 3 x 10; and 5 1/2 x 10 inches). Make the bowl opening to fit the bowl most frequently used. Cut 1/2 inch deep notches on both sides about 1 inch apart. Glue and nail the holder together as shown in the diagram. Using waterproof adhesive, glue 3/8 inch wide rubber weather stripping around the bowl opening and across the bottom edges of the frame to prevent slipping.

Stainless steel bowls with a rim wide enough to catch firmly in the notches are satisfactory. Unbreakable plastic bowls are preferred by some. Metal and plastic bowls with handles are easy to lift and fit into the bowl holder. Glass or china bowls are usually too heavy and frequently do not have a satisfactory rim.

Without the bowl holder, some people are able to use a plastic Grip 'N' Mix Bowl by Rubbermaid (source 7). Placed in the lap, the bowl can be stabilized with the arm for stirring or mixing.

A long-handled measuring cup or an ice cream scoop may be satisfactory for transferring batter or mixture from bowl to baking pans with one hand.

A plated metal frame with rubber feet holds a 3-quart stainless mixing bowl with handle while...
mixing is done. The bowl is lifted from the slots and batter poured into pan underneath. To scrape the bowl, it is lowered into the slots in pour position. Bowl lifts out for cooking and cleaning. This item has been found to be very helpful for people working with one hand. Available from sources 1 and 2.

**Handle Stabilizer**

A pan handle stabilizer can be made to attach to the range top (or the side, if the range is small and space between burners or units is limited). This allows the person with the use of only one arm to stir while the pan stays in a stable position.

To construct, follow the dimensions in the accompanying diagrams. The width of the center slot may vary, depending on the size of handles, and the slotted portion can be shortened or lengthened to accommodate the height of handles.

Either suction cups or strong magnets can be used to attach the device to the range. If suction cups are used, they adhere better when damp or wet. Press firmly to form good suction. If removing the holder from the range, slide it off or loosen suction with knife edge instead of pulling it up to prevent the cups from being torn loose from the wood.

This device can also be purchased from sources no. 1, 2, and 3.

**Can Openers**

Almost any standard electric can opener with a vertically straight cutting blade can be operated with one hand. The Oster Touch-A-Matic is excellent because the motor is activated with only light pressure with the finger or palm of the hand. An opener with a long lever that requires downward pressure to pierce the lid and activate the cutting action is also satisfactory.

An opener with a magnet to hold the lid while removing the opened can is preferable. The opener should be easy to move about on the counter as needed, remain stable during operation, be easy to clean, and have a protected cutting blade to avoid cuts on the fingers.

Set the can to be opened on a damp sponge, or several sponges on top of each other, until the top of the can reaches the cutting blade of the opener.

If the can opener tends to slide, it may be placed on a rubber or plastic mat or stabilized against the wall.
Jar Openers

Removing the lid from a screw-top jar when it is very tight is difficult. Two types of jar openers are available that makes this task possible for the person working with one hand.

The Zim Jar Opener is a deep wedge, lined with steel teeth that grasp the lid as the jar is turned. It can be attached to a wall and folds flat when not in use. If the opener can be hung above a counter or small shelf, it will be easier to set the jar down after it is opened, and spills will be easier to clean up than from the floor.

The Zim also has a bottle cap pry opener along the top edge. This opener is available in some larger hardware stores and from sources such as nos. 1, 2 and 3.

Some similar openers currently on the market are made from softer metal and are not as durable or satisfactory as the Zim.

A flat, half-circle, undercounter jar lid opener, called UN-SKRU, is available. It is less expensive and may be easier for some to use than the wedge type. It opens any screw lid from 3/8 inch to 3-3/8 inch without adjustments. Slip the jar lid into the opener where it wedges—turn with a quick, one-hand operation. It is made from durable plastic with a steel-ribbed gripper. This device is available from sources no. 1, 2, and 3.

It may be possible to open a jar by wedging it between the knees when seated. This method also works for anchoring bags or boxes of food for opening with one hand.

A bottle or jar may be clamped in a corner of a base cabinet. Use body to push drawer tight against the jar then remove cap.

Wrap a damp dish cloth around the jar to provide more friction as well as a precaution against breakage.

Non-slip flexible rubber grippers are also excellent. They are available from source no. 3.

Rocking Knives

Curved blade, rocking knives make food preparation and cutting food at meal time easy for the person with one hand. By rocking the handle up and down, the sharp, curved blade cuts meat and other foods easily. They can be ordered from sources no. 1, 2, and 3.

Auto Fork

A cooking fork with a double handle and a sliding metal plate to push food off the fork tines is available from source no. 6. The worker with one
hand can spear the food item, turn it over for further cooking, or transfer it to another location, then squeeze the handles together to release the food.

**Wonder Cups**

The Wonder Cup measures liquids, granules, and solid shortening easily and with less mess for the person working with one hand. Slide cup bottom to desired setting, fill to top, then push or pour to empty. Self-cleaning action removes all materials as ingredient is ejected, so the container need not be washed between ingredients. Available from source nos. 4, 5, and 9.

**Suction Brushes**

Two types of suction brushes are available. The double brush has heavy-duty nylon bristles for washing glassware, vegetables, and dishes. The six-inch rubber suction cup anchors firmly to side or bottom of sink.

**Long-Handled Sponges**

Long-handled sponges have many uses. Usually sold as bath tub scrubbers, they can also be used for dusting, cleaning the refrigerator, or cabinet shelves, mopping spills, etc. Available from sources no. 1, 2, 3, and 4.

**Small scrub brush**

A small scrub brush with two non-slip suction cups are excellent for many uses. Have one for hand washing, one for dentures. Keep one in the kitchen for vegetables, silverware, dishes, etc. Available from source nos. 1, 2, and 3.

**Tongs**

Some workers find short kitchen tongs better to lift, turn, or transfer food than a fork. They are readily available in houseware departments and mail-order houses.

Tongs may also be used as "reach extenders" for retrieving items from high shelves or from the floor, or as an aid to bedmaking. Long tongs are available from sources no. 1, 2, 3, and 5.
Lock-On Drainer
A flat aluminum drainer that locks on any size pan up to 9½ inches in diameter allows the worker to safely drain foods with one hand. This is available from sources 1, 2, 3, and 6.

Ejector Spoon
This spoon dispenses anything from cookie dough to peanut butter, with one hand. Made of stainless steel, it has a push spring-action level on the 8-inch handle. See source no. 9.

Kitchen Shears
Shears are useful to cut open plastic or paper packages. An imported brand, Fiskars, is very light-weight and can be purchased for the right or left hand. They are available from department and fabric stores and mail-order houses throughout the country.

Snippers
Five-inch snippers may be used while held in the palm of the hand and blades closed with the fingers and thumb. A spring action opens the snippers. These are available in fabric and department stores. One manufacturer is Wiss.

Kitchen Aprons
A plastic apron hoop with a terry cloth hand towel makes a no-tie, no-iron apron. It can be fitted around the waist and removed with one hand. To construct: Fold over 1½” on the long edge of the towel and stitch. (Run the apron hoop through the casing.) One or more face clothes may be sewn to the towel as pockets.

Cleaning Apron
Although some hazard is involved with loose pockets, a cleaning apron with several pockets for holding a dust cloth, a damp sponge in a plastic bag to wipe up stubborn spots, a paper bag to hold scraps to be thrown away, and another to hold items that must be returned to their proper places is convenient.

To construct: Use about 30 inches of cotton material such as terry cloth, denim, or some other easy-care fabric. Amount of material may vary with desired apron length. It should be short...
enough to be comfortable and the contents of pockets should not hit the knees.

1) Sew a 1-inch hem at the top edge as a casing for the hoop.
2) If the material has no right or wrong side, hem the bottom edge to the outside and turn up about 10 inches to form pockets. If material has right and wrong side, cut off a 12-inch piece of material and make seam with wrong sides together to turn up for pockets.
3) Stitch down along apron side edges.
4) Stitch at desired intervals to make pockets.

To put the apron on grasp the center front of the hoop at “A” in sketch. Hook the outside end of hoop “B” at your side and straighten until the hoop curves around your waist.

The plastic hoop can be purchased at notion counters or from sources no. 1, 2, and 3. They are available in small, medium and large sizes.

Techniques To Simplify Work for the Worker with One Hand

- Almost every meal requires some cutting preparation. Knives should be kept sharp and a solid cutting board is a necessity.
- Use the cutting board with built-up corner to anchor boxes and open with linoleum knife or shears.
- Keep frequently used staples such as flour and sugar in canisters with easy-to-lift lids on the counter to avoid having to move them.
- When measuring dry ingredients, level the measuring spoon by scraping it against the container or by shaking off the excess.
- If it is necessary to take an opened can of food containing liquid across the kitchen, place the can in a bowl or pan to carry it to avoid spills on the floor.
- A kettle of water on the range or counter next to it will be more convenient than returning to the sink or water source for water for cooking.
- Pre-packed commercial or home-produced foods in boiling bags heated in boiling water or a microwave oven make meal preparation easy.
- Pre-cut, loose pack frozen vegetables save time and energy. Plastic bags are easier to open than boxes. Loose pack in bags allows use of the desired amount; the remainder can be re-tied and placed back in the freezer.
- Use a baster to remove excess fat when frying bacon or fat and juices from meatloaf and roasts, before carving or serving.
- Ladle or spoon hot foods from saucepan rather than lifting the pan for draining if it is heavy.
- A damp cloth or fingertip towel with a loop for fastening on wheelchair, cabinet, or range handle is handy.
- A rubber mat on the counter or work surface will stabilize bowls, cold pans and boxes.
- Nonstick finishes make pans and utensils easy to wash.
- A microwave oven is a safe, quick cooking method for casseroles, vegetables, fruits, boneless meats. The microwave oven is also excellent for reheating left-overs and there is no “left-over” flavor.

Storage:

Remove seldom-used tools, equipment, saucepans, and other items from kitchen drawers and cabinets to make needed items easier to find.

Periodically, remove obsolete or unused items from medicine chest, clothes closets and dresser drawers. Frequently used items will be easier to locate.

Store items where they are most frequently used. For example, pot holders, pancake turner, baster, and slotted spoon should be near the range center.

Keep frequently used items in convenient, easy-to-reach locations when possible. The electric mixer and can opener, flour and sugar canisters should be at the back of the counter in the mix center.
Store sharp knives on a magnetic knife rack hung on the wall or other special rack for greater accessibility and safety.

Use peg board for hanging frequently used tools where they are used, for example, measuring cups and spoons at the mix center.

Use heavy magnetic hooks on refrigerator, range, and other metal surfaces for hanging pot holders, tools, towels, and recipes in use.

A new item on the market, the Kitchen Carousel, holds up to 40 kitchen tools and knives. It rotates completely around like a lazy susan and helps organize a kitchen or workshop. It is available from source nos. 8 and 9.

Safety Precautions

Unplug mixers from electrical outlet before inserting or releasing beaters.

Keep sharp knives and other sharp objects in special holders instead of loose in a drawer.

Clean up spills immediately from floor to avoid falls. Long-handled sponge or mop should be used for clean up if your balance is poor.

Do not wear loose or full sleeves that might catch on pan handles or catch on fire.

Avoid garments with large, in-seam pockets or tie belts that might catch on knobs or handles.

Sources

Many of the items mentioned in this bulletin are available from large hardware stores and housewares departments of department stores, or they may be ordered from supply houses like the ones listed. Sources 1 and 2 do not have catalogs. Call or write them for current prices for these and other needed items. Sources 3 through 8 have catalogs for these and many other useful items.

1. United Medical Mart
   11833 New Halls Ferry Road
   Florissant, MO 63033
   Telephone: (314) 838-3100

2. Doctor’s Equipment Service
   6021 Troost
   Kansas City, MO 64110
   Telephone: (816) 523-6644

3. Fashion Able
   Rocky Hill, NJ 08553

4. Miles Kimball
   41 West Eighth Ave.
   Oshkosh, WI 54091

5. Nasco Home Economics Catalog
   901 Janesville Ave.
   Fort Atkinson, WI 53538

6. American Foundation for the Blind
   Consumer Products Department
   15 W. 16th St.
   New York, NY 10011

7. Rubbermaid
   Wooster, OH 44691

8. The Garden Way
   Country Kitchen Catalog
   Charlotte, VT 05445

9. Walter Drake and Sons
   Drake Building
   Colorado Springs, CO 80940

Two books that may be helpful to people with physical disabilities are:

Mealtime Manual (paperback price: $3.25)
   Box 65
   Ronks, PA 17572

The Source Book for the Disabled (paperback price: $9.95)
   W. B. Saunders, Publisher
   W. Washington Square
   Philadelphia, PA

To simplify information, trade names and illustrations of products have been used. No endorsement of these products is intended, nor is criticism implied of similar products which are not mentioned.