

Tips for Aging at Home: Doing What Matters to You

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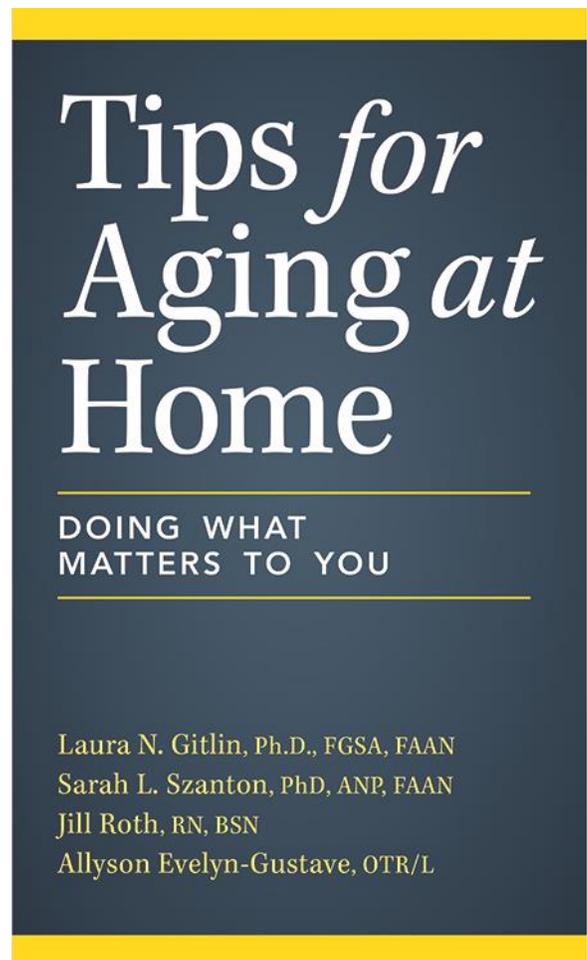
Introduction

Carrying out everyday activities, such as getting dressed, bathing, or preparing meals, may be difficult for you. There are simple things to help you continue doing the activities you enjoy, like going to temple or church, visiting friends and family, or going shopping.

This book has tips on how to carry out daily activities you may value - safely and easily. Some tips may require small changes to your home. Most tips cost nothing. Some of the tools recommended, such as a jar opener, long-handled reacher, and pillbox, have a small cost. Some suggestions involve installing equipment in your house such as grab bars and railings, for which you may want to engage a handyperson.

Most suggestions you can do on your own. Other tips need training from an occupational therapist or nurse.

Occupational therapists and nurses are uniquely trained to help people learn new strategies to make everyday tasks easier.



Who are Occupational Therapists (OT)?

Occupational therapists look at a person's home and the way they live and carry out their day-to-day activities. They are experts at figuring out easier ways to do everyday tasks like cooking, cleaning, bathing, visiting friends and family or shopping.

Occupational therapists can help anyone, but they are especially helpful to people who have a hard time engaging in activities due to weakness or illness. An occupational therapist can work with you to identify your goals and how to achieve them safely.

Who are Nurses?

Nurses promote health through preventing illness and injury, and decrease suffering by providing health care for individuals, families and communities. A nurse can help you stay in your home by working with you to manage pain, mood, and medications, and to provide strength and balance and fall-prevention strategies.

Who Is a Handyperson?

A handy person can be a man or woman who is knowledgeable about home repairs and home modifications. Repairs that can help you do the things you want to might include patching holes in floors, installing new door locks, or fixing broken steps. Common home modifications may include installing grab bars in bathrooms and railings in stairwells. Other helpful and inexpensive improvements can include re-routing electrical cords, installing motion lights, and adding chain extensions to ceiling fans and lights.

How to Use This Tip Book

The tips in this book can help you:

- Do everyday activities safely.
- Do everyday tasks in small parts to make each part easier and less tiring.
- Decrease risk for falling.

Turn to the section that you are interested in. Read the suggestions on that page and see which ones work for you. Keep in mind that everyone is different and that all of the tips listed might not work for you. You may need to change a tip to fit your situation.

Some people find it helpful to write down the tips that they have tried and how they worked. There is a page for you to keep track of what works for you at the end of the book.

The suggestions in this book come from research with older adults, people with physical disabilities, and the best clinical practices of occupational therapists and nurses.

The tips offered in this book were tested as part of a randomized clinical trial, Project ABLE (Advancing Better Living for Elders), and expanded on in the CAPABLE program. Older adults who participated in these studies worked with occupational therapists, nurses, and physical therapists (in ABLE) and used the tips in this book. Participants reported fewer difficulties and more confidence with their daily activities and decreased fear of falling. Those who participated in the ABLE program lived longer than other older adults. Most of the CAPABLE participants were able to care for themselves more easily and were less depressed.

The authors intend this book for guidance, not to replace advice or directions given by your primary health care provider, occupational therapist, nurse, or other health professional. Some recommendations may require additional instruction from a therapist. Because this book contains suggested tips, the authors disclaim liability for any injuries resulting in connection with their use.