

A245.7
3
1253

The Texas A&M
University System

B-1253



**Texas
Agricultural
Extension
Service**

Daniel C. Pfannstiel,
Director
College Station

ABILITY NOT DISABILITY

**Grocery Shopping
and Food Preparation**



[Blank Page in Original Bulletin]

ABILITY — NOT DISABILITY: GROCERY SHOPPING AND FOOD PREPARATION

Disabilities make grocery shopping and food preparation difficult for the homemaker with limited use of one or both arms — approximately 12 percent or 45 million homemakers are affected by some type of physical disability. However, grocery shopping and food preparation can be easier for the handicapped homemaker who follows these helpful hints.

Grocery Shopping

These shopping hints make food buying easier for the handicapped homemaker.

- Plan ahead to make the shopping trip less tiring and more pleasant.
- Shop with a friend or family member — pushing a grocery cart strains the hands and may be extremely difficult for the homemaker in a wheelchair.
- Select a grocery store with carry-out service.
- Be sure someone will be at home to carry in the grocery bags.
- Buy groceries in large amounts for a period of several weeks so frequent trips to the store are not necessary.
- Shop with a list at a familiar store to avoid hunting for various food items.

- Buy small cartons of milk which are easier to lift and pour. Use both hands to carry or pour from any heavy container.
- Select convenience foods in flip-top boxes. These boxes open easily by putting the box on the table and pushing the lid open with the entire hand and arm. Although convenience foods cost more, they save the homemaker's energy.
- If a container has a pull strip or perforated opening, place the box on the table and use a small knife to slit the top open.
- Smaller jars are easier to lift and open.
- Never lift extremely heavy bundles. Seek help from a store employee if assistance is needed. Lift sacks of sugar and flour from underneath with both hands if you are alone.

Adapting Work Areas

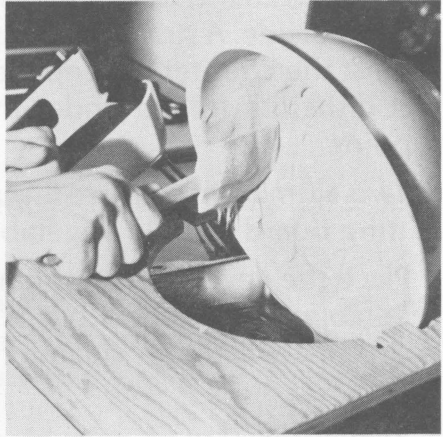
For the homemaker in a wheelchair or with limited use of limbs certain changes in the arrangement of the kitchen may be necessary. Most homes today have small kitchens which make it difficult to find space for a sit-down area, but even the tiniest kitchen can be adapted. Sitting while working can be a nuisance if all materials are not at hand, so gather all equipment first and then sit down.

If adjustments need to be made for a wheelchair, refer to *B-1254 Ability — Not Disability: Wheelchairs*.

Special Kitchen Equipment

Pull-Out Work Surfaces. A board, such as a chopping block, placed on a pulled-out drawer can be used as a work surface if the drawer is the proper height. It should go over the thighs when seated and the top of the drawer should be low enough so that the hands are a little below the elbow when working. A board cut out to fit a bowl makes a convenient mixing center.

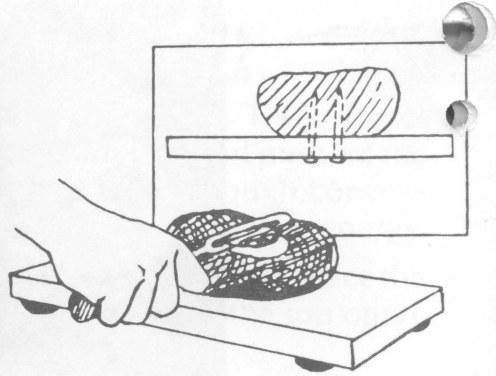
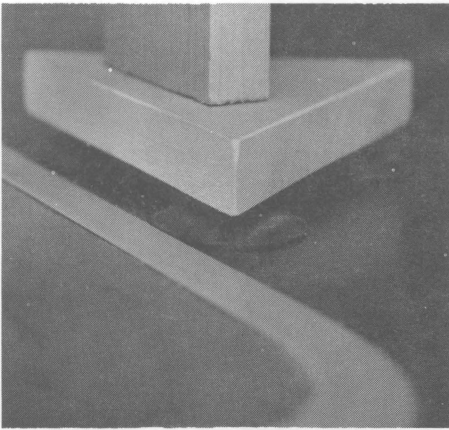
Wooden Bowl-Holder. This unit will hold a bowl firmly upright for mixing or stirring or on its side for pouring or scraping the contents from the bowl.



A holder also can be made on a stand or on a flat board that fits over a drawer. Notches hold the bowl on its side while the contents are scraped out. A wide-rimmed bowl is satisfactory. Unbreakable plastic or stainless steel is lighter than glass or china and usually has a better rim.

The pull-out board can contain several size openings for holding bowls. The holder grips the bowl so it does not have to be held while stirring.

Chopping Block With Vegetable Holder. A chopping block made with a vegetable holder will alleviate one of the major problems for rheumatoid arthritics, prolonged or static holding. Holding anything for too long a time is tiring.

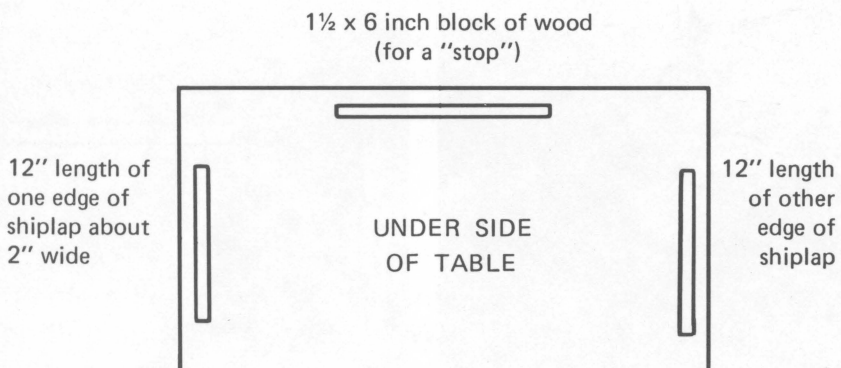


To stabilize the board, four suction cups may be attached to the underside. A strip of wood along the front underside will fit against the counter to keep the board from moving around. A wet dishcloth folded under the board also will keep it from slipping.

Two aluminum nails are inserted through the bottom of this cutting board to hold vegetables for peeling and chopping.

Place the vegetable on the nails and peel or chop. Turn the vegetable as needed. A piece of waxed paper placed on the board first will aid in cleanup.

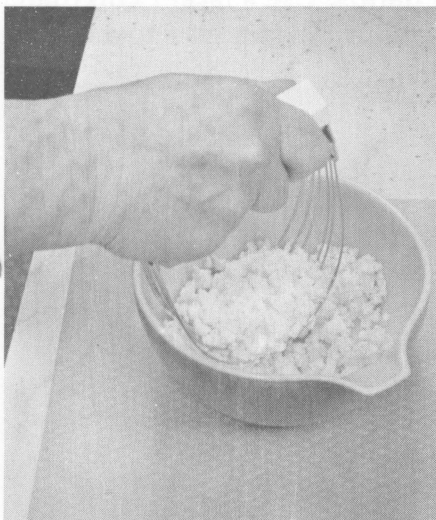
Television Tray. A television tray fitted with a board top makes a good sit-down area because it can be compactly stored. The table and board can be moved to any room to be used for various projects. The tray must be high enough to fit over the thighs and low enough to allow the hands to work below the elbow. To make this type of tray, you will need a TV or snack tray and legs, one 3/8-inch (.927 cm) piece of plywood approximately 20 x 25 inches (50 x 63 cm), and one 12-inch (30.5 cm) piece of shiplap. Cut a 2-inch (5 cm) strip from each of the grooved sides of the shiplap to make the grooved strips for the tray to slide into. If you cannot obtain shiplap, two 12-inch (30 cm) strips of wood of different widths nailed on top of each other will provide the grooves to slip the tray into. Nail these pieces to the underside of the plywood as far apart as necessary to permit the tray to slide easily into the grooves.

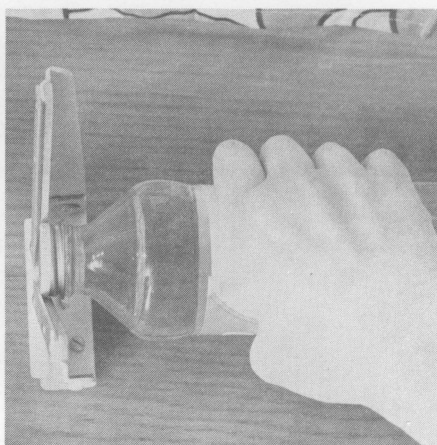
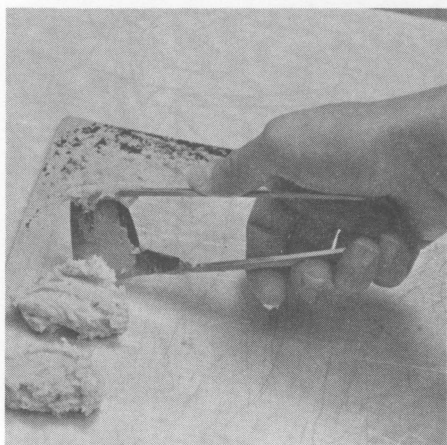


Nail a block of wood approximately 1½ x 6 inches (3.8 x 15 cm) as a "stop" near the back edge of the plywood.
Finish with varnish, wax, or paint.

Pastry Blender. A pastry blender may be used as an egg chopper.

Kitchen Tongs. Kitchen tongs have many uses. They are convenient for lifting plastic cooking pouches from the water or for turning meat in the frying pan.

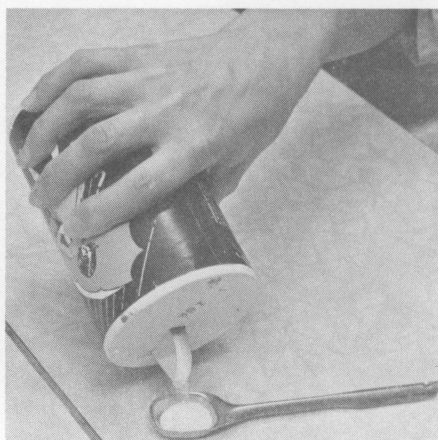
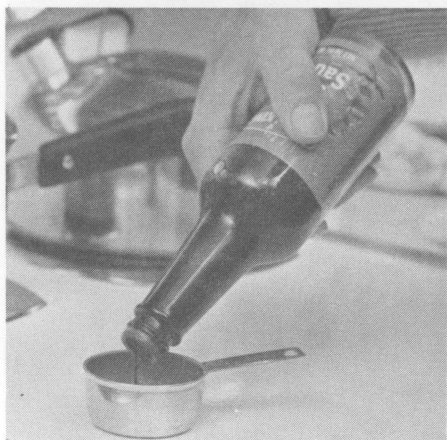




Cookie Dropper. A cookie dropper cuts off just the right amount of dough and drops it onto a cookie sheet with the use of only one hand.

Jar Opener. A V-shaped jar opener with teeth along each edge grips the cap so the jar can be turned with one hand.

Measuring Equipment. Most hardware stores carry flat-bottomed measuring cups and spoons that can be used without holding them in the hand. The cups should have long handles for easy gripping. Long-handled measuring cups can be grasped by the whole hand and not just the fingers. The cups also can be lifted with both hands. Use a larger cup than necessary to avoid spills when transferring contents to a bowl.



Flat measuring spoons with raised handles that lie flat can be used for measuring without being held. Push the handle over the edge of the counter to make it easy to pick up.

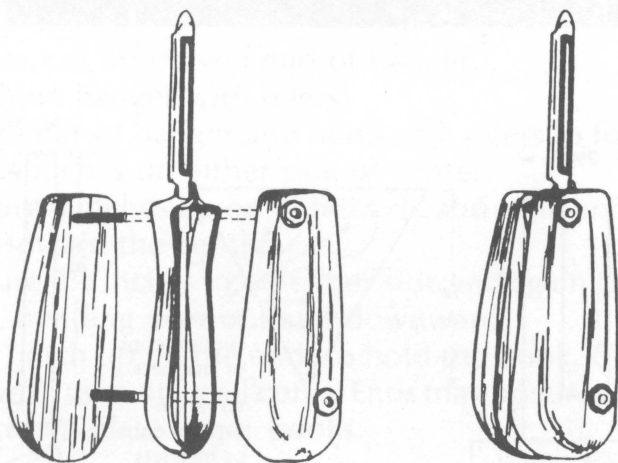
Use lightweight mixing bowls, pans and dishes.

Peelers. Peelers often have small handles that take too much bending and strain to grasp. When working with any utensil like this, rest hands often by stretching the fingers out flat on the counter top.

One type of peeler available in most hardware stores allows four fingers to grasp it at once and takes the strain off one or two fingers. With this type, peel toward the body.

The handle of a regular vegetable peeler may be enlarged with a few extra materials:

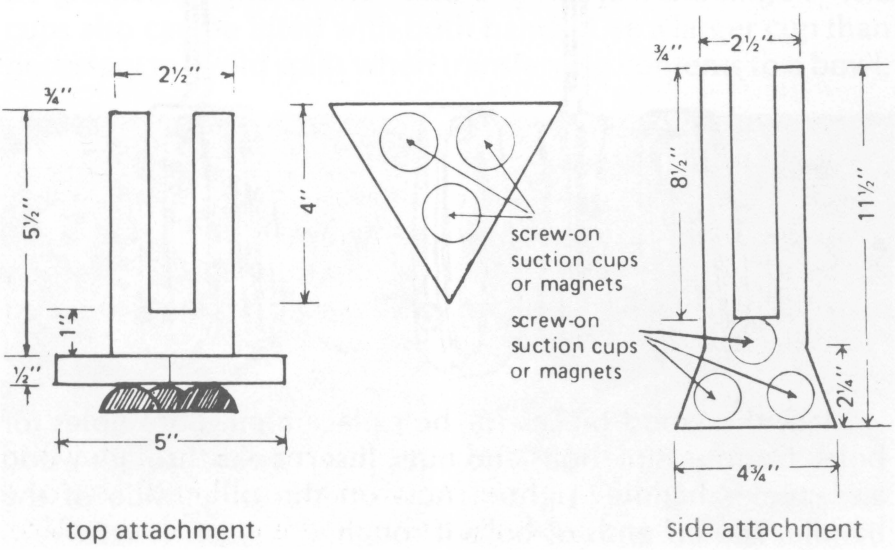
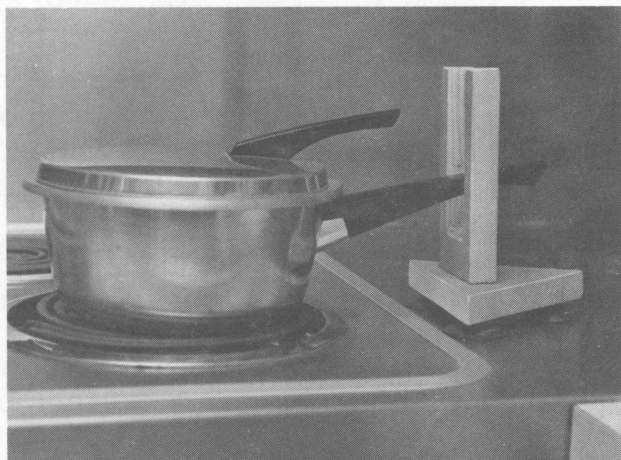
- 2 pieces of wood for handle, ½-inch thick x 2 inches x 3½ inches. Soft wood pine is easier to shape than hardwood.
- Bolts; 2 flat-headed brass bolts size 3/16-inch x 1½-inch long.
- Nuts; 2 brass nuts to fit the bolts.



Mark the wood pieces for bolt placement. Bore holes for bolts. Counter sink bolts and nuts. Insert bolts through wood and peeler handle. Tighten nuts on the other side of the handle. File off ends of bolts if rough.

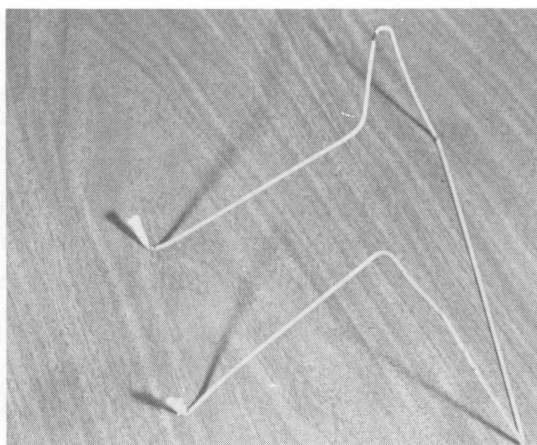
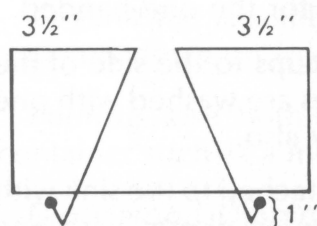
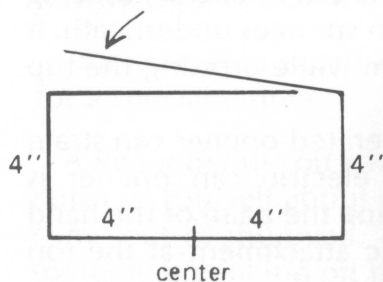
Pan-Handle Holder. A handle holder stabilizes pans for easy stirring at the range. This holder is simple to make and can be attached to the range with suction cups or a magnet. The width of the center slot may vary with the size of the handles.

On a small range, the space between burners is too small, so a holder that will fasten to either side of the range is best. The slotted portion can be shortened or lengthened to accommodate the handle height.



Recipe Holder. Avoid holding items continuously even if it is only a recipe card. When reading a book or cooking, use a holder. A transparent plastic model can be purchased or a simple book holder can be made from a coat hanger.

To make this item, you will need an ordinary wire coat hanger, wire cutters, pliers and a ruler.



Instructions:

1. Twist or cut off curved end of hanger.
2. Straighten hanger with pliers.
3. Find center of hanger and bend with pliers to form a right angle 4 inches on either side of center.
4. Measure 4 inches up on either side and form another right angle toward the center.
5. Measure 3 1/2 inches in on either side and again form a right angle, bending wire out and downward.
6. Bend 1 inch up on the ends to hold the book. Cover sharp ends with tape or small corks. Ends may be turned up more to accommodate larger books.

Knives. Serrated knives are easiest to use because they grip the vegetable instead of sliding off. Keep all knives sharp. A heavy French chef's knife will also hold the vegetable in place.

Wrap one hand around the handle and, with fingers extended, push down on the blade with the other hand. This distributes the weight and allows the arms to do the work. Margarine or butter can be cut in the same way. Push down with a rocking motion.

Can Opener. Use a standard electric can opener by bracing the can against the cutting blade with sponges underneath. It can also be done by holding the can while pressing the top control with a free finger.

Opening cans with a manually-operated opener can strain ligaments and weaken joints. An electric can opener is available that can be operated by using the palm of the hand instead of the fingers. The magnetic attachment at the top holds the cover in place for easy removal.

Electric can openers are convenient for the one-handed.

Brush. A brush attached by suction cups to the side of the sink stays firmly in place while potatoes are washed with one hand. Hands can be scrubbed this way also.

Washing Glasses. A small dish mop attached to the sink with suction cups or a magnet helps you wash glasses with one hand.

Support Strap. Someone with a leg brace or crutches can use a strap around the hips to provide extra support while standing at the sink.

Chairs. The type of chair used is a personal choice as long as it gives good support. Some people prefer chairs on casters so they can move around the kitchen without getting up. The chair arms should support the homemaker when sitting or rising. The seat should be large enough to firmly support the hips. Seat padding and a small pillow placed at the back may make it more comfortable. Height is most important. The seat should let the feet rest flat on the floor and slightly to the front, allowing the knees to be at a greater than 90 degree angle to relieve strain. The lower back should be supported so that shoulder and arm movements are not inhibited. Sitting straight with shoulders balanced directly over hips allows a person to accomplish tasks comfortably while seated.

Special Techniques

Special techniques and devices make homemaking easier for the person who has use of only one arm or limited use of both arms. These ideas should not keep you from devising your own equipment and methods. People often can find a way that works best for them.

Planning. Plan ahead and start preparations a few days ahead for a special dinner.

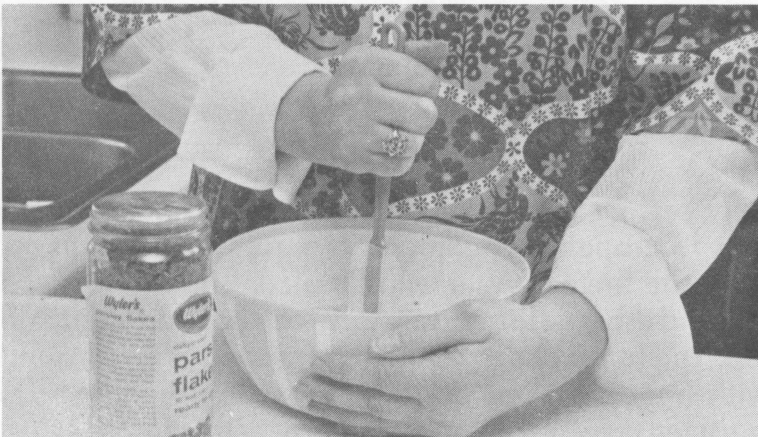
A Reminder. If you have trouble remembering details, write notes to yourself about appointments and times for dishes to come out of the oven. Always set the timer when you have something cooking on the stove.

Organizing. Assemble all ingredients first. This saves steps and cuts down on frustration.

Pouring. Use both hands when pouring from any heavy container such as a milk carton.

Dip Method. Dipping flour and sugar from cannisters with a measuring cup is easier than spooning it out. Level off a measuring spoon by scraping it against the container.

Stirring. A wet dishcloth will hold a bowl steady while stirring. When stirring with the right hand, stir counter-clockwise. When stirring with the left, stir clockwise. Arthritic



hands tend to bend toward the little finger, so any movement in that direction should be avoided. Alternate hands frequently to rest them while stirring. The handle of the spoon should be parallel to the knuckles. Never allow a utensil to slip between the fingers and force them to the little finger side.

Opening Packages. Use a knife or scissors to open packages. Left-handed scissors are available.

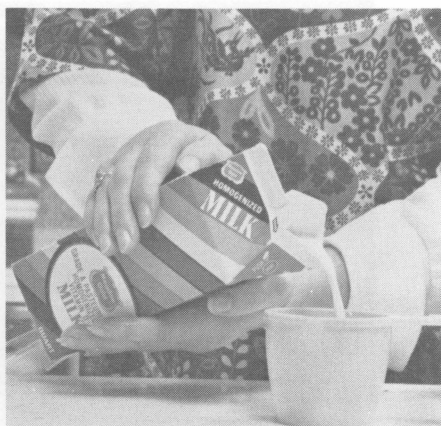
Brace packages against your body when you pry open the top.

Buy packages with pull tabs that are easy to open. Brace them against your body or in a drawer and pull the tab open.

Never push in a box tab. The force required can overstretch ligaments, leaving thumbs unstable. A linoleum knife which comes with a large handle is easy to hold and the whole arm can be used to slit the box open. Lay the box down and hold steady while cutting.



Many orange juice cans and other containers come with flip-tops that open by pulling a steel ring. Never pull on the ring with the fingers. A table knife blade should be placed in the ring and the whole hand and arm can be used to pull on the flip-top. The other hand should be wrapped firmly around the can with fingers placed evenly. Always use the largest joints and muscles possible when doing any activity.

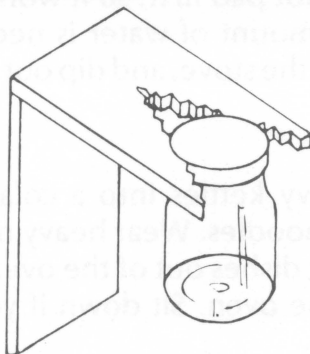


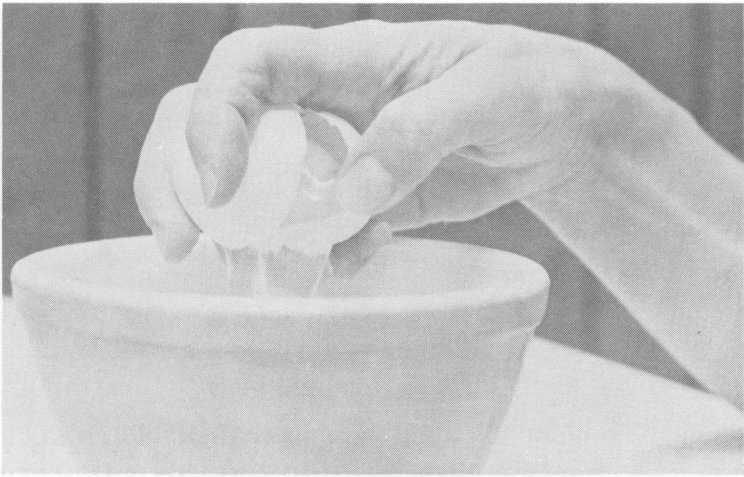
A table knife is also used to open milk cartons. Lay the carton on its side. Wrap the hand firmly around the table knife and use the blade to separate the lips. Set the carton up and finish opening it with the knife blade. Then with the palms of the hands, not the fingers, press the spout open. Always buy the smallest cartons available because they are easier to handle. When pouring from any heavy container, use both hands to distribute the weight.

Open cellophane or paper packages with scissors.

Use your teeth to open a package with pull tape or open it part way with scissors and rip it the rest of the way.

Hard-To-Open Jars. Jars with hard-to-open caps can be braced between the legs and the fleshy part of the hand can be used to remove the cover. A jar also can be braced in a drawer or door. A special V-shaped jar opener grips the cap while the jar is turned with both hands.





Cracking Eggs. The secret of cracking an egg with one hand is the way the egg is grasped. Hold the egg at the base of the fingers (not in the palm of the hand). The thumb and forefinger grip one end of the egg with the second finger holding near the base.

Crack the egg sharply on the edge of the bowl between the first and second fingers. Hold the egg over the dish immediately.

Pull the fingers in opposite directions and the shell will open as though it were on a hinge.

Filling Pans with Water. A hose at the sink is valuable for filling heavy pans on or close to the range so they do not have to be moved far. When sliding pans, it is best to have the range or surface unit at the same height as the counter. If the pan is hot, slide it onto a hot pad first, so it won't mark the counter top. If just a small amount of water is needed, keep a pan of water on the back of the stove, and dip out the needed amount with a soup ladle.

Draining. Tip heavy kettles into a colander in the sink to drain vegetables or noodles. Wear heavy oven mitts when you do this. When taking dishes out of the oven, it is handy to have a counter next to the oven. Sit down if you are unsteady on your feet.



If a small quantity of vegetables has to be drained, a slotted spoon can be used at the range.

Other tips include:

- Slide dishes and pans along the counter instead of lifting them.
- Sit down when putting something in the oven. Ovens are available with doors that swing open from the bottom so you do not have to reach over a hot oven door.
- Use a wheelcart for moving heavy dishes or for gathering several objects at one time to cut down on trips.

Homemakers with disabilities can continue their homemaking chores by using these labor saving techniques and equipment for food preparation and shopping for food.



A14838 315826

Most of the items mentioned can be purchased at hardware stores or ordered from mail order houses for rehabilitation equipment.

Fashion Able
Rocky Hill, New Jersey 08553

Fred Sammons, Inc.
Box 32
Brookfield, Illinois 60513

Miles Kimball
41 West Eighth Avenue
Oshkosh, Wisconsin 54091

Sphere Merchandising
P.O. Box 266
Northfield, Illinois 60093

Rehabilitation sections of such catalogues as Penney's, Sears Roebuck and Montgomery Ward.

Adapted from *Ability — Not Disability Series*, Bulletins 1, 2, 3, 5, 7 and 8; Agricultural Extension Service, University of Minnesota by Mary K. Sweeten, Extension foods and nutrition specialist, The Texas A&M University System.

[Blank Page in Original Bulletin]

Educational programs conducted by the Texas Agricultural Extension Service serve people of all ages regardless of socioeconomic level, race, color, sex, religion or national origin.

Cooperative Extension Work in Agriculture and Home Economics, The Texas A&M University System and the United States Department of Agriculture cooperating. Distributed in furtherance of the Acts of Congress of May 8, 1914, as amended, and June 30, 1914.