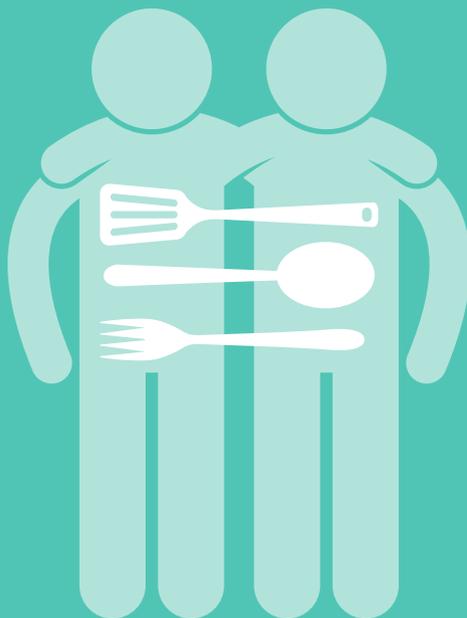




Quick Tips



Preparing food

Sometimes it can become difficult to prepare food as we get older. It can be because our eyesight is not as good, or we find it harder to grip things or stand for as long, or we find it harder to remember what comes next, or all sorts of other consequences of health problems.

The good news is that there are ways we can overcome most of these challenges. Here are some ideas of what worked for other people.

Kettles and teapots

Most of us enjoy a cup of tea or coffee every day. But lifting a heavy kettle full of boiling water can be tricky. Here are things you can try.

- Fill up your usual cup with cold water, put it in the kettle and if possible mark where the water level is with a permanent marker so you know in future how far to fill it up.
- Use a smaller, lightweight electric kettle – either one aimed at older people or a travel kettle.
- If you like to use a teapot, consider getting a 2 handled one, to make it easier to pour from.

Knobs on appliances

Sometimes it can be difficult to see the settings and where to turn knobs to on appliances like cookers and microwaves, and also things like washing machines. This is where bump-ons (self adhesive raised dots) or liquid plastic (it's like a glue, which sets hard) can be helpful. You apply them to mark the position you use most often and then you can feel if the knob is in the right place.

“When I could no longer see the little marks around the control knob for the oven, my son stuck some bump-ons for me. Now I use them everywhere, on the washing machine, hob and soup maker.”

Saucepans

Sometimes using a saucepan can be difficult – they get heavy, the handle can be tricky or painful to grip.

- Use a saucepan with handles on both sides as that way you can distribute the weight.
- It is also possible to get saucepans with angled handles, so your hand is in a more natural position when holding the pan.
- Try using a cooking basket if you are cooking something in boiling water. When the food is cooked you just remove the basket with the food in it from the water, with no need for draining and later when the water is cooled you can tip that away.
- Try a saucepan handle holder – these fix to the cooker with a suction foot and you can then stir a saucepan using only one hand.

Chopping and cutting

If you are having trouble with chopping or cutting, there are lots of different type of knives and adaptations you can try.

- Angled knives - these are useful if you have poor grip or restricted movement.
- Rocker knives - these work by using downward pressure to chop/cut food, making it possible to use with just one hand.
- Easy grip or contoured knives are also worth trying if you have difficulty holding a knife.
- Some people find an electric knife is easier.
- Scissors work for many types of food.

Or you could decide that instead of buying special equipment, you just won't chop food.

“I have different coloured scissors in the kitchen, the black ones I use only for food. It’s made such a difference, I can cut most things easily now.”

“I can’t chop safely anymore, so I now buy ready chopped vegetables. So easy and quick – I wish I’d found them years ago.”



Food Buddies Quick Tips

Food Buddies develops practical help for older people, people living with dementia and other people who sometimes have problems around food. We are trying to make life easier for people, staying safe and continuing to shop, cook and enjoy food.

This guide has been brought together with older people and their friends and families who are sharing their experience to help other people. We hope it is also useful for volunteers and staff who support people.

We would like to thank everyone who has helped us develop our Quick Tips.

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