



## 10 Tips for Keeping Your Independence

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Alzheimer's disease is always changing you. One day you may be able to do something, and the next day you may not. However, you can continue to live independently during the early stages of the disease by making simple adjustments, taking safety precautions and having the support of others.

**1) Get help with daily tasks.** Give yourself more time and less hassle by using services that can take care of everyday activities like shopping, cooking, bill paying and housekeeping. You could also ask a friend or relative to help with these tasks.

- Get meals or groceries delivered to your home. Also consider stocking your freezer with microwave meals.
- Use a lawn service to do yard work.
- Ask your bank if they provide services to help pay bills and keep track of your accounts. Or, have bills paid directly from your checking or savings account.
- Hire a cleaning service to vacuum, dust, mop and do laundry.

**2) Use memory aides.** Labels, lists, notebooks and sticky notes can help you cope with memory loss.

- Label drawers to help you find things.
- Keep important numbers by the phone.
- Post reminders to lock doors or shut windows.
- Have step-by-step instructions on how to work appliances (such as the computer) or complete routine tasks (such as fixing your hair).

**3) Take safety measures.** Make home safety improvements, such as installing grab bars in the bathroom to minimize falls. Use appliances that have an automatic shut-off feature. Enroll in [MedicAlert® + Alzheimer's Association Safe Return®](#) to help protect your safety in case you cannot find your way home or if you have a medical emergency.

**4) Plan for the future.** At some point, it will become too difficult to live independently. Make plans now for your future care so your family can honor your wishes. A good place to start planning is with [CareFinder](#), our online guide helping individuals and families find the right care options.

**5) Take your medications as prescribed.** Taking your Alzheimer meds can help minimize symptoms. Consider using a pill box to help you organize medications. Ask the pharmacist or a family member to place pills in the pill box for you. Write down the times to take your medicine on a calendar.

**6) Have a plan to get around.** If it is no longer safe for you to drive, there are other ways to get where you need to go. Ask family and friends for a ride. Take taxi cabs or other public transportation. Some communities offer paratransit services for seniors and those with special needs.

**7) Protect yourself from solicitors and potential fraud.** Do things that will limit solicitors calling you on the phone or sending you mail. Get your phone number registered on the "[national do not call list](#)." Consider getting Caller ID so you know who is calling you. Stop unwanted junk mail by [taking steps to get off mailing lists](#).

**8) Stay active.** Continue doing hobbies you enjoy. Whether it's gardening, dancing, painting, volunteering, playing sports or card games, you will benefit from the mental and social stimulation.

**9) Talk to friends about your memory loss.** Your friends may not know how "to be with you" after you disclose your diagnosis. Put them at ease. Talk openly about your memory loss and allow them to ask questions. You will get their support and understanding.

**10) Get support.** [Get in touch with the Alzheimer's Association](#) for information and support. We can give you referrals to local programs and services that can help you keep your independence. You can also talk to others who know what you are going through on our

[message boards.](#)

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