



## 10 Ways an Occupational Therapist can Help Make the Everyday Possible for Seniors

An OT is a health professional that empowers people of all ages to overcome barriers in their everyday lives, so they can do more and live better. The following are 10 ways an OT can help with making your everyday possible.

### 1 Strategies for Living with Chronic Disease

OTs are able to support self-management of your health condition by providing you with strategies for completing your day-to-day tasks within the boundaries of your assessed strengths and weaknesses. You will learn how to pace yourself, how to plan and organize your tasks to balance rest with activity, how to set YOUR priorities, and how to become more efficient in order to use your muscles more effectively and conserve energy by reducing the workload on your body.

### 2 Strategies for Managing in the Kitchen

Health changes such as decreased strength, decreased balance, and decreased cognition can all affect how someone is able to manage completing tasks in the kitchen. An OT can help you with problem solving and provide suggestions for how to set up the kitchen work space to maximize using your strengths and compensate for any weaknesses.

### 3 Strategies for Managing in the Bathroom

From turning on the faucets and brushing your teeth, to the potentially riskier task of using the bathtub, an OT can provide solutions for safety and independence in the bathroom environment. The OT will know where you need to install grab bars and what type of tub seat to use.

### 4 Strategies for Fall Prevention

OTs are able to complete a thorough falls risk screening and provide recommendations for minimizing your risk of injury. Your risk for falls increases as you age, and falls are a leading cause of injuries for seniors. These injuries can undermine your ability to live independently and can lead to a decreased quality of life. Knowledge on fall prevention is one way to help ensure you will be able to age-in-place successfully.

### 5 Suggestions to Support Your Caregiving Tasks

An OT can provide suggestions to help a caregiver provide assistance without compromising their own health. OTs can review body mechanics and transfer techniques, discussing with you what home health equipment can be used to decrease the risk of injury to yourself or your loved one.

### 6 Suggestions for Home Modifications and Accessibility

Should you build a ramp or buy a porch lift? How wide should the doors be? OTs know about universal design and how to make a home accessible for a walker or wheelchair. An OT can help you weigh the pros and cons of the decisions you need to make about your home, so you can make an informed choice for all your home modifications.



## 7 Restoring Self-Care Skills

Sometimes a change in health can affect a person's ability to complete basic self-care activities (such as feeding, grooming, and dressing) and a compensatory skill or an assistive tool will need to be used. OTs are skilled at finding alternate methods for completing activities, and can show you where to find and how to use items such as wide handled utensils, adapted spoons, long handled brushes or sponges, sock aids, shoehorns, elastic shoe laces, dressing sticks and much more.

## 8 Assessment of Driving Skills

Is my parent still safe to drive? How can I adjust my driving to stay safe on the road? These are questions an OT can help you answer. Some of the warning signs that may indicate the need for a driving assessment include: increased weakness and fatigue, difficulty reaching, difficulty turning your head, getting lost in familiar locations, an increase number of traffic violations (i.e., not using the turning signal, driving too fast/too slow, running stop signs), or a series of near misses or minor accidents. An OT can provide a thorough assessment and offer recommendations that will keep everyone safe.

## 9 Assessment of Cognition and Strategies for Living with Memory Loss

OTs are able to complete assessments to test for memory loss, and if a person has mild memory loss the OT can provide strategies to allow that person to successfully live on their own with minimal supervision. The OT can recommend items such as a kettle that shuts off automatically, a pill box with an alarm, or a stove top element that shuts off when unsafe temperatures are reached.

## 10 Assessment for Mobility Aids such as Walkers and Wheelchairs

Should my parent use a walker? How do I find the right wheelchair? An OT can help you determine the right aid for your current, as well as your future needs. They will help you determine if you should buy new or look for a recycled item, and show you how to use your new walker or wheelchair safely. Moving safely within your home and community will help you with making your everyday possible.

**For more information about Occupational Therapy  
or to find an OT**

visit [www.OTOntario.ca](http://www.OTOntario.ca)

**or contact the Ontario Society of Occupational Therapists**

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