

# Tips for Living With Low Vision

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**Do you find certain activities, such as reading, shopping or cooking, difficult because of your vision? Does this cause you to eat most of your meals at restaurants instead of at home? Try the following tips to help you maintain independence in your daily activities.**

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## Reading

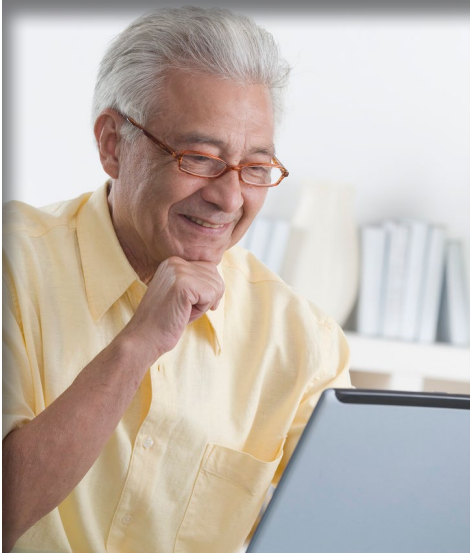
Glare and color contrast (different colors) often affect the ability to read recipes, food labels or shopping lists.

### To minimize glare:

- Use shades on lamps.
- Use blinds over windows when the sun is glaring.
- Use a gooseneck lamp over the shoulder and below eye level for reading and other close-up activities.

### To magnify print characters:

- Use mounted, stand or hand-held lit magnifiers.
- Use high-powered reading glasses.



## **Computer Programs**

**Some computer programs can make reading easier. Two examples are JAWS, a screen-reading program for computers, and Kurzweil 3000, a scan-and-read software for printed or electronic text.**

**You can change color combinations and font size on your computer and web browser for easier reading. Look under the “Control Panel” or “Options” on your web browser to adjust the settings. Refer to the American Foundation for the Blind website ([www.afb.org](http://www.afb.org)) for specific details.**



# Grocery Shopping

Shopping for groceries can be quite a daunting task when you are living with low vision. Try the following to make your shopping experience easier:

- **Plan ahead before shopping, making grocery lists or menus for a week at a time.**
  - **Ask grocery clerks to help in choosing fresh produce, or ask the butcher to cut meats at the counter, saving on preparation time at home.**
  - **When choosing produce, use other senses such as touch and smell to pick the freshest food. For example, feel the neck of a pear for ripeness.**
  - **Take the guesswork out of picking fresh produce by buying precut packaged options, such as pineapple, strawberries, broccoli and bagged salad greens. Also try precut frozen vegetables.**
  - **Try online shopping, now offered by many grocery stores.**
- Also, you may ask your store about other services, such as personal shoppers.**



## **Cooking**

**Many adaptive kitchen tools are available for purchase, including “talking” thermometers and microwaves, colored and large-numbered measuring cups, and food choppers that eliminate the need to use knives. Consider these other tips when cooking:**

- Limit glare in food preparation areas.**
- Use contrasting colors when measuring or pouring. For example, measure dark brown sugar in a white measuring cup.**
- Wear oven mitts that cover up to the elbow.**
- Try marking commonly used temperatures on oven and microwave settings with small dots of brightly colored craft paint.**
- When using a cutting board, use colored boards that contrast with the food being cut. For example, cut a dark red apple on a white cutting board.**



## **Quick, Healthful Foods**

**Eating mostly processed foods, such as canned soups, frozen meals and**

**other boxed dinners, at home may seem easy. However, these foods often contain large amounts of calories, fat and sodium, which can be harmful to your health if eaten too often. Many convenient and healthful foods are available at grocery stores.**

**Try eating these convenience foods more often:**

- **Precut and packaged fresh produce (strawberries, pineapple, cauliflower, carrots, broccoli, etc.)**
- **Frozen fruits and vegetables**
- **Reduced-sodium canned vegetables and beans (rinse and drain to remove additional sodium)**
- **“Lean” or “healthy” frozen dinner and canned soups**
- **Frozen “steamable” vegetables or meals**



## **Eating Well When Eating Out**

**Eating out does not have to mean eating unhealthfully.**

**When eating at restaurants, try to follow these tips:**

- **Drink water, low-fat milk or other drinks without added sugars, such as unsweetened tea.**
- **Start your meal with a salad packed with veggies to help control hunger and feel satisfied sooner.**
- **Choose steamed, grilled or broiled dishes instead of those that are fried or sautéed.**
- **Avoid foods with creamy sauces or gravies.**
- **If portion sizes are too large, set aside or pack half of your food to go immediately when it is delivered. Be sure to refrigerate leftovers as soon as you get back home.**



## **For more information regarding low vision:**

**See a qualified occupational therapist (OT) to receive coaching. OT coaching should occur as soon as vision becomes difficult (20/70).**

**Ask your doctor about an OT referral.**

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**For more information on this  
and other topics, see  
[www.ag.ndsu.edu/food](http://www.ag.ndsu.edu/food)**





## Resources

**These websites have additional low-vision cooking tips and adaptive technology.**

**Many companies sell assistive items for those with visual impairment. This listing is for educational purposes only and is not intended as an endorsement.**

- [www.shoplowvision.com](http://www.shoplowvision.com)  
(variety of items for those with visual impairment)
- [www.visionaware.org](http://www.visionaware.org)  
(resources and support for those with vision loss)