

TOOLS for Independence™

MAKING YOUR LIFE AT HOME EASIER AND SAFER



April 2009

Brought to you by:

THE TOOLS FOR
INDEPENDENCE INITIATIVE
OF THE

**INDEPENDENT
LIVING
PARTNERSHIP**

On the web at:
www.toolsforindependence.org

Little Bag Opener

Struggling to open that bag of spinach or potato chips is no fun! Here is a simple solution...

Available for about \$2 at YES I CAN in Cathedral City or La Quinta — 1-800-366-4226.



Published by:

The nonprofit Independent Living Partnership (ILP) - working for the rights of all to live independently in their own homes and communities.

Visit us at:
www.livingpartnership.org

Struggling to Open Those &@ \$#% Human-Proof Packages?

The Ultimate Package Opener is a heavy-duty device with a push button on the top that automatically extends a blade to open plastic clamshell cases (like the one AAA batteries come in), corrugated boxes, banding straps and other hard-to-open items. The device comes with a non-slip



comfort grip handle and a clear plastic safety lid. It measures 6.5 inches long, weighs about 2 ounces and comes in assorted colors. *Price:* \$5.99-\$7.99 (shipping and handling not included). The lowest price we have found is from www.jokari.com (800-600-9817).

California Telephone Access Program Provides Free Specialized "Amazing" Phones

for California residents who have difficulty hearing, moving, seeing, remembering or speaking? Also available: **A Free Speech-to-Speech Service for speech-disabled individuals** so they can communicate with others by phone.

Call 1-800-806-1191, TTY 1-800-806-4474, or visit www.ddtp.org. Both programs are sponsored by the California Public Utilities Commission.



Looking for a Rental Car that can Accommodate Your Disabled Parent or Loved One? —

The AVIS Access Program provides a range of special products and services for physically challenged and visually impaired drivers and passengers. Call 1-888-879-4273, TTY/TDD: 1-800-331-2323 for information.

A READER IMPROVISES and Is Still Playing Bingo

Reader Helen M of Green Bay, Wisconsin is 92 and has severe arthritis. She loves to play bingo but stopped when she couldn't easily pick up the chits because of her arthritis. While she didn't know that there are bingo pieces specially designed to help people like her, Helen came up with her own no-cost solution: She pulled out the hotel pieces from an old Monopoly game her kids use to play and used them instead of the coin-like chits.



Tell Us What You Need — Or How You Improvised to Make Your Life Easier
E-Mail YOUR ideas to us at Editor@TOOLSforIndependence.org

Door Murals — These “visual deterrents” disguise doors that are not safe for those with Alzheimer’s to use. Any door can be disguised as book shelves or pantry shelves by applying the special mural, which comes in a standard 3’ x 8’ roll that can be trimmed to size.

Prices average \$38.95 for the kit. For information, visit thealzheimersstore.com or call 1-800-752-3238.

Mail Chime — When the weather is poor, going out to check the mailbox can be undesirable or hazardous. Mail Chime lets you know the minute the mail has been delivered. A sensor mounted on

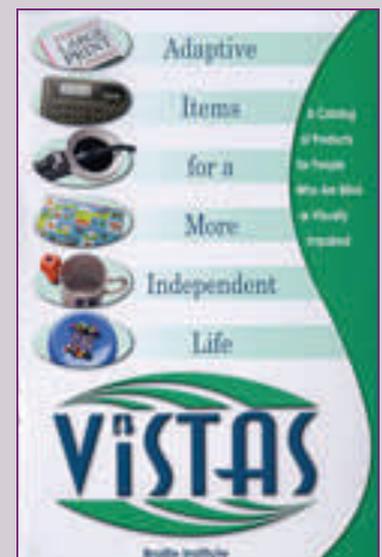
the mailbox door sends a wireless signal to the unit, which announces delivery with a red LED light and four beeps. A reset button programs the unit for the next day’s delivery. Range up to 300 feet. The basic unit sells for \$49.99.

The basic unit is \$49.99. For information call 1-800-762-7846 or visit smarthome.com.

DID YOU KNOW—Braille Institute Offers Programs, Helpful Tips, and Courses to Help People With Low or Failing Vision Better Manage Their Daily Lives...

In addition to classes on adaptive cooking, computer labs, independent living skills and home and personal management, your local Institute may also offer fun enrichment classes on ballroom dancing, keeping your mind sharp, tai chi, storytelling and more.

Every Braille Center also has a Vistas store with consumer products that make everyday tasks easier to perform. For the location of Braille Institute programs near you, call 1-800-272-4553, or visit www.brailleinstitute.org.





For Traction on Ice and Snow

If you live in a wintry climate and don't want to slip and fall outside, **STABILizers Lite™** may be the answer. Simply pull the ice grippers (small cleats attached to a lightweight elastic sling) over your shoes and presto—the cleats dig in when you walk on ice and give you extra traction. They come in small, medium and large sizes designed to fit men or women. *Price:* About \$20 a pair. Visit www.improvementscatalog.com, or call 1-800-642-2112.

MaximEyes — Here's a helpful plug-in web browser tool for people with low-vision impairment who want to surf and work on the web. The special toolbar for use with Internet Explorer 6.0 allows you to control the size of website text and images, and even have web content spoken aloud through a "click-and-speak" synthetic speech tool.



Web pages can be magnified from 1 to 16 times and background, text, and link colors can be customized. The software costs \$59.95 and is available through American Printing House (APH) for the Blind. A special free limited-use version is available on APH's website.

For more information, call 1-800-223-1839 or visit www.aph.org/products/me_bro.html.

Alarm Watch -

Cadex 12 — This watch provides up to 12 daily reminders for medication, bladder emptying, and other tasks. The alarm includes a sound and programmed message display feature, as well as a "snooze" feature that allows you to turn off the initial beeping and be reminded every three minutes. An emergency "Alert Databank" can be used to store critical health information similar to an ID bracelet.

Price: \$89.95. For information visit www.cadexproducts.com or call 1-800-549-0095.

Touchless Trash

Can—You've seen them in public bathrooms, and now you can get them for your home. Invisible, harmless infrared technology enables this 13-gallon trash can to open automatically with a wave of the hand. It also closes automatically, so it's 100% hands-

free! The top also can be operated manually. Visit www.thebidetsolution.com or call 1-707-578-6049.



Staying in the Lines Made Simple —

It is easy to write checks with check writing guides made out of metal or plastic. Maxiaids.com offers a regular black plastic guide for only \$1.29 each. It is designed for use with a standard sized check and provides three 1/4" wide openings for date, payee, and written dollar amount. A one 1/2" wide opening in bottom right corner can be used for signatures. Visit www.maxiaids.com or order by phone at 1-800-522-6294.

Walk-in Bathtubs Are Great, But — A reader sends us this advice for anyone considering installing a walk-in bathtub. Yes, they offer easy in-and-out access. But they take 30 minutes or more to fill up once in the tub, and then you have to wait another 10 to 15 minutes for the water to drain once you're finished. This can add anywhere from 45 minutes to an hour to your bath.

PILL DISPENSER HABLA ESPAÑOL —

Here's a weekly pill dispenser made for those who speak Spanish and take their meds at breakfast, lunch and dinner. The *e-pill Weekly Pill Dispenser* releases

medications up to three times per day for a full week. It includes color-coded trays that are clearly marked with mealtimes in Spanish (Desayuno, Comida and Cena).

Each carousel stop is labeled with the days of the week in Spanish. Its small size makes it ideal for use in the kitchen. Available at \$49.95 from e-pill at <http://www.epill.com/dispensador.html>, or by calling 1-800-549-0095.



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NOTICE

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This newsletter is published by the *Independent Living Partnership (ILP)*. ILP works to ensure the independence and dignity of the elderly and persons with disabilities, their families and caregivers through education and access to empowering services and resources. This is accomplished through collaborative and cooperative partnering with public and private organizations, agencies and businesses. The goal is to help people lead more satisfying and rewarding lives, often in spite of significant health and mobility challenges.

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