

11 Tips to Help Maintain Independence Despite Visual Impairment

1. **Make what you want to see larger** – there are 3 types of magnification
 - a. Relative distance magnification – object is brought closer to the eye (i.e. sit closer to the television)
 - b. Relative size magnification – object is made larger (i.e. large print books, large print checks, larger television)
 - c. Angular magnification – object is not changed in position or size, but an optical system is placed between the object and the eye making the object appear larger (i.e. hand magnifier, telescope, electronic magnification)

2. **Increase task illumination**
 - a. Use gooseneck lamps, flashlights and illuminated magnifiers
 - b. Use task lamps and daylight bulbs
 - c. Bring lighting within one foot of print

3. **Decrease glare** – glare can further reduce vision and cause eye fatigue
 - a. Decrease glare from lighting, windows and the sun
 - b. Using amber or yellow tints cut glare and enhance contrast

4. **Enhance contrast between what you want to see and its surroundings** – most people with visual impairment see better if objects are black and white (i.e. a white coffee mug offers more contrast to the coffee)
 - a. Do not use heavily decorated plates
 - b. Do not use clear glasses or dishes

5. **Make sure you are using the correct magnification product and product power for the task** – not all magnifiers are the same
 - a. Using the wrong power magnifier will result in failure
 - b. Have your eye doctor prescribe the correct magnifier, eyeglasses or telescope for reading or for a specific task

6. **Learn to use your magnification products correctly** – this takes practice and patience!

7. **Low vision glasses or products are often task specific** – you may need more than one low vision aid to accomplish all tasks
8. **Learn to use your eyes more efficiently** – learn to use a more peripheral part of the retina to see more clearly
9. **Substitute ears for eyes**
 - a. Get books and magazines on tape for free from the talking book library
 - b. Use talking watches, clocks, calculators, scales, glucometers and computer software
10. **Be your own advocate**
 - a. Tell friends you are visually impaired and ask that they introduce themselves
 - b. Ask for large print menus
 - c. Get large print checks from your bank
 - d. Become familiar with community resources such as support groups, transportation services, aging services
11. **Do not become dependent on others** – learn to use low vision aids and learn to do things differently in order to become independent

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