

How To Complete Everyday Tasks with Low Vision

How can you dial a phone, write yourself a message or send an email if you have low vision?

Here are some of the common strategies and tools used to accomplish daily tasks. You will learn that how a task is performed is not as important as getting the job done.

Seeing

- Use color contrast to make objects visible. Similar colors — navy blue, brown and black — cause objects to blend together. You can build color contrast into your environment. For example, black coffee is easier to see in a white cup and your white plate stands out when you put it on a dark red placemat.**

- **Add lighting is your environment. Task lighting increases the visibility of reading material or whatever you are trying to see. Accent lighting (such as over kitchen counters) can increase your ability to function. You can use small flashlights or other portable lights to illuminate restaurant menus. Most hand-held magnifiers also include a small LED light for this purpose.**
- **Reduce glare — the light that bounces off shiny surfaces or general brightness that can prevent you from seeing clearly. You can wear sunglasses or a hat with a brim as protection against glare. Indoors, you can use curtains and blinds, as long as the lights are on in the room.**
- **Use glasses, if your doctor prescribed them. While they may not give you 20/20 vision, they will provide the best possible corrected acuity.**

- **Remember that close proximity often helps you see something better. One common example is you may have to move your chair closer to the screen to watch TV.**

Reading and Writing

- **Write with bold black pens. They are easier for you to see than regular blue ball-point pens. Sometimes very thick black markers are the only tool that produces a legible document when you are writing notes to yourself.**
- **Try printing. It is more legible than cursive writing. You should use both upper and lower case letters for better overall word shape recognition. (Words written in all capitals become all rectangular in shape: "EGGS" vs. "eggs")**
- **Use bold lined writing paper, plastic writing guides, a crease in a piece of paper or a ruler to act**

as a guide to keep your writing in a straight line.

- **Find a hand-held magnifier, desktop video magnifier or portable video magnifier that works for you. These tools can help to enlarge print or aid in other tasks.**

Keeping Appointments/Telling Time

- **See if there is a large print calendar or watch that is big enough for you to easily see.**
- **Consider buying a talking watch or talking clock. They eliminate the need to see the time.**
- **Try using a small portable voice recorder. It can be a quick solution to recording important information such as doctor's appointments, phone numbers and other personal notes without having to worry about reading your handwriting for accuracy later.**

- **Explore the accessible technology options. You can use smart phones, tablets and speakers to keep track of appointments and check the time.**

Using the Phone

- **Consider a large button phones for your landline. These are easy to see and many have helpful features like speed dial. Most phones have a bump or other tactile marker on the “5” to help you locate all the buttons. For tips on dialing a phone, read our [Dialing the Phone](#) resource sheet.**
- **Try the Jitterbug or Doro if you are looking for a flip phones that is vision loss-friendly. Both these phones have features that make them easy to see or hear.**
- **Learn about all the benefits of an iPhone. These phones are very accessible for people with vision loss. Using VoiceOver or SIRI allows you to use these phones completely independently.**

Using a Computer

- Use the accessibility features in Windows to enlarge font, increase color contrast, or make the cursor easier to see. Look under “Control Panel.”
- Explore the low vision accessibility features built into Apple computers. Look under “General.”
- Think about other accessibility options. Screen magnification programs, such as ZoomText® and ZoomText Fusion® can be purchased for your PC.

There are adaptations for everything you need to do (activities of daily living). Second Sense’s Certified Vision Rehabilitation Therapists can provide training for any activity of daily living.

Most of the items described here can be purchased in our [Product Center](#). Second Sense provides training on using the iPhone, iPad and desktop computers. See our [Adaptive Technology program](#) for more information.