

Instrumental Activities of Daily Living

Instrumental activities of daily living, or IADLs, are activities that allow a person to live independently in a community. The ability to perform IADLs can significantly improve a person's quality of life and include cooking, cleaning, transportation, laundry, managing finances, and managing medication. Because it can be difficult to accomplish IADLs after a brain injury, addressing them is important in the journey to recovery and independence.

There are several ways a person with a brain injury can improve or maintain their ability to perform IADLs including:

- Exercise – research shows that even simple physical activities improve mental health, cognitive function, and sleep; it also helps with weight control.
- Focus on wellness – eating healthy foods such as fruits, vegetables, and complex carbs, staying hydrated, and getting enough sleep supports overall health.
- Accept help – this could mean letting a friend help you create a budget, install an app that manages medication, or it could mean professional support from an occupational therapist.
- Embrace technology – low and high tech solutions including medication reminders on Alexa, face-to-face communication with friends/family/professionals over a smart device, tracking devices, apps, etc. can increase your independence and decrease social isolation and loneliness.
- Practice – you can improve sooner if you practice; ask a trusted friend or family member to review how well you did and be open to their feedback.
- Adapt your environment – for example, make sure the path to the bathroom is clear of furniture; use a bench in the bathtub; buy non-tip cups; utilize grip extensions; get rid of clothing with buttons if difficult to manage; join a meal subscription plan – get creative!

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