

Services

Slow movers feel the cold and therefore need heating to be at least 18°C.

Good lighting is essential for safety and efficiency. Low light levels can cause fatigue and depression.

Socket outlets and switches should be positioned between +450 mm and +1200 mm above floor level.

Align light switches with door handles. Large rocker or tip switches need less pressure to operate.

The cords of ceiling switches can be fitted with large wooden rings for easier opening.

Door switches are useful for lighting the interiors of large cupboards or larders.

Electric plug tops are available with large integral handles, making plugging and unplugging easier and safer.

Appliances

Sinks with integral drainers and tap holes avoid water spilling on to counter tops.

Single lever mixer taps are easier to operate, especially for those with arthritic hands, than taps/mixers with separate round handles.

Filling large pans with water can be difficult, so position the mixer at the corner of the bowl nearest the drainer where the pan can be filled from the draining area.

Waist-high ovens, refrigerators and dishwashers are best for those who cannot easily bend down. However, note that this arrangement will take up more space.

Ovens should have drop-down doors which provide a surface on which to rest hot dishes.

Electric hobs with a continuous flat surface are safer to use than individual electric or gas rings, except in the case of the blind where gas is preferred as it can be heard.

Cabinets

Drawers, pull-out shelves and carousel trays are easier to use than fixed structures in base cupboards.

Wall storage, providing it is not too high, is useful as it reduces the need to bend down.

Open wall shelves are easier, but less dust-free, than wall cupboards with doors. Avoid wall storage in the corner of an 'L'-shaped worktop where it may be out of easy reach.

'D' handles for cabinet doors are easier to use than knobs.

For those who have difficulty walking, fix a 35 mm diameter grip rail along the front length of the worktop.

Useful devices

Many small electric appliances are extremely useful for those with limited dexterity. These include blenders, mixers, knife sharpeners, carving knives and can openers.

Similarly, electric frying pans, deep fryers, slow cookers and toasters are often preferred, and can even replace the conventional cooker.

Aids for the elderly and disabled are available from specialist manufacturers such as:

- Perching high chair with adjustable height legs
- Long-handled dustpan and brush
- 'Helping hand' device for extending reach with jaws activated by a trigger on the handle
- Kettle tipper – kettle or teapot held in tilting cradle
- Trays with non-slip finishes – also available with a raised handle for carrying with one hand
- Cutlery with easy-grip handles and angled heads