

Aids And Equipment (Assistive Technology)

- **Assistive Technology (AT) are aids and equipment that can help people to complete everyday activities and participate in the community**
- **There is a wide variety of AT available, depending on needs**
- **A health professional can provide assessment and recommendations for AT**
- **There may be funding assistance available for AT**

What is Assistive Technology?

The term “assistive technology” (AT) refers to aids and equipment, or changes to the home, work or other environments. Some examples of aids and equipment are wheelchairs, leg braces and shower chairs. Changes to the environment include things like ramps, rails and wheelchair-friendly kitchen benches. AT makes it easier for people to complete their daily activities and participate in the community.

What is available?

There is a very wide range of AT available, and it is important that it meets your specific needs. Your health professional will assess you and recommend the best AT for you.

There are many reasons that people need AT, and many examples. Here are some examples of AT that polio survivors might use:

Problem	Health professional/s to see	Some examples of AT
Challenges with balance, walking and climbing stairs	Physiotherapist Orthotist Occupational Therapist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walking stick • Four-wheeled frame • Wheelchair • Rails and ramps • Braces (e.g. AFO, KAFO)
Challenges with showering and dressing	Occupational Therapist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shower chair • Rails • Long-handled equipment
Fatigue	Occupational Therapist Physiotherapist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mobility scooter • Changes to desk set-up • Smart phone to organise schedule
Unable to rise from a chair	Occupational Therapist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Height-adjustable chair • Electric recliner chair
Difficulty swallowing food	Speech Pathologist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Texture modified diet
Challenges using hands for everyday tasks	Occupational Therapist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tap turners or lever taps • Key holders • Keyless door entry • Jar openers

Things to consider when choosing AT

- **Fit:** wheelchair, braces, walking frames and other AT devices need to be assessed and measured by a professional to make sure they fit properly
- **Portability:** do you need to put this equipment in the car? Is it lightweight and foldable?
- **Battery life:** some devices, such as scooters and smartphones, run on batteries - and you need to think about how long you'll be using it
- **Future proofing:** are things likely to change? Do you need to think about AT you'll need in the future?
- **Appearance:** if you don't like the look of it, are you going to use it?
- **Use:** do you need training in how to use this device?
- **Environment:** is this equipment suitable for your environment (e.g. stairs, gravel, room to manoeuvre inside)?
- **Support available:** do you need someone to help you use, move or adjust this equipment? Is there someone available?
- **Repairs:** when this item needs fixing, updating or replacing, will you know who to call?



Disclaimer: The views expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of Polio Australia, and any products, services or treatments described are not necessarily endorsed or recommended by Polio Australia.

Funding

Some funding may be available for AT. To find out more, contact the following organisations:

If you are under 65 years of age:

[National Disability Insurance Scheme \(NDIS\)](#)

Ph: 1800 800 110

If you are over 65 years of age:

[My Aged Care](#)

Ph: 1800 200 422

State-based funding:

Visit www.polioaustralia.org.au/lifestyle-aids-and-equipment and click "Funding" tab

Individual Help

- Ask your doctor for a referral to see an [Occupational Therapist \(OT\)](#)
- Contact the [Independent Living Centre](#) or 1300 885 886

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