

Building & Preserving Independence

Look for what the person can still do - including parts of an activity.

Independence does not have to mean doing everything alone. A person may complete part of a task, make the choices involved, need only setup or a reminder, or participate while receiving hands-on help.

Use this resource to notice where support is truly needed and where participation can be protected or safely increased. Follow professional recommendations and established safety instructions.

Person:

Date completed:

Activity	Full Help	Some Help	Supervision / Reminder	Independent
Bathing / grooming				
Dressing				
Meals / eating				
Walking / mobility				
Toileting				
Household task				
Communication / phone				
Other				

An activity where more participation may be possible:

Break the Activity Into Parts

Instead of asking only, “Can I do this?” ask, “What parts can I do?” Many everyday activities contain several steps. Keeping even part of the activity can preserve skill, confidence, choice, and involvement.

Activity or Task	Parts I Can Do Myself	Where I Need Help	What Might Make Participation Easier

One part I want to keep doing myself:

One part where setup, extra time, equipment, or a reminder may be enough:

Am I Helping More Than Is Needed?

Caregivers often step in because it is faster, familiar, or feels safer. Sometimes that help is necessary. At other times, the person may be able to do more if given time, setup, a reminder, or the opportunity to try.

Situation	What I Do Now	Could Less Help Be Enough?	What We Could Try
Morning routine			
Personal care			
Meals			
Mobility / getting around			
Household / daily task			
Communication / decisions			

Something I may be doing automatically that the person could participate in:

What would help me step back without ignoring safety:

Protect Choices, Not Just Tasks

Participation includes decisions as well as physical tasks. Even when someone needs substantial assistance, there may still be choices they can make about clothing, meals, timing, activities, visitors, rest, or how help is provided.

Choice or Decision	What the Person Wants to Keep Deciding	How We Can Protect That Choice
Daily routine		
Clothing / personal care		
Meals / drinks		
Activities / social life		
Rest / pace		
How help is provided		

A choice that matters more to the person than I realized:

Something caregiving should not unintentionally take away:

When preferences differ, a respectful way we can discuss it:

Try a Little More Independence - Safely

Choose one realistic activity or part of an activity. The goal is not to prove independence or push beyond safe limits. It is to test whether the person can participate more with the right support.

Activity or part we want to try:

Plan	What We Will Do
What the person will try	
Support, setup, cueing, or equipment available	
Professional instructions or safety limits to follow	
When / where we will try it	
What would mean we should stop or get guidance	

What happened when we tried:

Next time: same support / less support / more support / ask for guidance because:

Independence Review - What Has Changed?

Abilities and support needs can change in either direction. Review the pattern rather than assuming yesterday's level of help is still the right level today.

Activity	Earlier Level of Help	Current Level of Help	What Changed?

Something the person can now do with less help:

Something that now needs more help, supervision, or professional guidance:

An ability, routine, or choice we especially want to preserve:

Our next practical step:

Date to review again:

These categories are organizational tools, not clinical ratings. Do not reduce assistance, change equipment use, or alter a professionally recommended safety plan when doing so could create risk. Ask the appropriate healthcare or rehabilitation professional when you are unsure.