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Ability Tools
Ability Tools connects
Californians with
disabilities to assistive
technology devices,
tools and services to
make life easier.

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CalAgrAbility **FACTact**

Ability Solutions for Agricultural Communities

Small Solutions for Big Jobs

Assistive technology (AT) helps our farmers to farm successfully and reduces the need to rely on others to perform essential tasks to keep the farm operational. Properly selected AT, as well as changes to the work environment, will make it easier to perform farm tasks safely.

One of the most common conditions reported by CalAgrAbility farmers and workers is *arthritis*, especially in the hands, legs and back. Arthritis can make gripping small objects a challenge for farmers. The Arthritis Foundation recommends using larger handles and knobs, which can be adapted as controls or switches on machinery, as well as on doors. Figure 1 is a tool to help grip a steering wheel easier and safer. Below are a few more examples of AT that can be implemented.



Figure 1: Steering
Wheel Knob

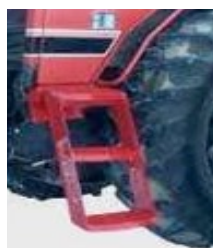
Hitching, plowing, and mowing require looking behind the tractor, which means twisting the upper body. This often exacerbates an existing back injury for farmers. In some tractors, a swivel seat pan can be added to help rotate the whole body to see behind.

(Fig. 2: www.FarmEasier.com, swivel seat)



Not all tractors will accommodate a swivel seat. To reduce upper body turning, mirrors can be added inside and outside of the tractor cab to see what is happening behind the tractor.

(Figure 3: www.agrability.org, breakaway mirrors)



Lower mobility challenges due to getting up and down on large machinery can be painful. Most factory-installed steps on tractors are 18"-24" from the ground, making it difficult to mount safely. Many manufactures make add-on kits to attach steps and grab bars. (Fig. 4: www.fyi.uwex.edu, add-on steps)

DISCLAIMER: The University of California provides technical assistance to aid farmers in finding appropriate machine modifications, and for liability reasons UC does not design, fabricate, and install machinery controls. The modifications shown here are only to illustrate possible approaches to farm machinery accessibility for individuals with disabilities. Only licensed, experienced professionals should design and install controls modifications on cars, trucks, and other highway motor vehicles.

California AgrAbility assists injured or disabled farmers, ranchers, or workers and their families. In California agriculture, workplace injury rates are 50% higher than average. Our farmers and their employees experience a wide range of injury or illness and some use different types of assistive technology to help them continue farming safely. Below are resources to find solutions to farm safely with assistive devices or other simple ideas to change the work environment.

Assistive Technology for People with Hidden Disabilities

North Dakota Interagency Program for Assistive Technology (IPAT)

PO Box 743 Cavalier, ND 58220

1-800-265-IPAT (4728)

<http://www.resnaprojects.org/nattap/library/conference/jlee.pdf>

This booklet was developed to highlight AT solutions to aid folks with safety, task completion, and socialization. It offers personal stories and AT strategies that might help. Funding sources and manufactures are listed. The booklet is available online and through mail upon request.



Ability Tools AT Exchange

<https://exchange.abilitytools.org/>

1000 G Street, Suite 100

Sacramento, CA 95814

1-800-390-2699

The AT Exchange is a free service that connects Californians to the assistive technology (AT) devices they need to live independently. Here you will find new and used low and high-tech devices for people with disabilities that include magnifiers, mobility devices, hardware and software, and even farming and gardening tools!



Assistive Technology Solutions in Minutes: Ordinary Items, Extraordinary Solutions (Version I or II)

This book contains many low-cost assistive technology approaches that can be made in five minutes. Willkomm takes ordinary, everyday items and turns them into extraordinary solutions for individuals with disabilities. The book will demonstrate "Do It Yourself" problem solving without the need for power tools or electricity, empowering everyone to be spontaneous and create solutions to everyday challenges using everyday materials. This book contains over 750 photographs with step-by-step fabrication instructions.

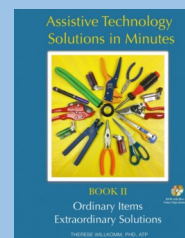
IOD Bookstore at the University of New Hampshire Institute on Disability

Author: Therese Willkomm, PhD

<http://www.iodbookstore.org/products/Assistive-Technology-Solutions-in-Minutes-II%3A-Ordinary-Items,-Extraordinary-Solutions.html>



Version 1



Version 2



United States
Department of
Agriculture

National Institute
of Food and
Agriculture

nifa.usda.gov/program/agrability

This is supported by USDA, NIFA project number CA-D-BAE-2271-OG.



CalAgrAbility serves farm and ranch families affected by disability and illness protecting the quality of life and preserving livelihoods.

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