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## Tips & Tricks for Independence

- Catheterization: This is the MOST important thing to be able to do. It is obviously harder for girls to learn than boys, but, it is possible with a little practice. This is key for anyone to be able to work, live on their own, or even hang out with friends.
- Catheters: I order mine online without a prescription, but you can also have a doctor write a prescription for them. At home I reuse mine by rinsing them out with Povidone Solution. At work or out in public I use them once and then throw away. I also use hand sanitizer before catheterizing to keep germs at bay.
- Driving: Unless you live in a big city that has public transportation driving is necessary. Anyone that is paralyzed in their lower body will need hand controls for them to drive. When I was in school Driver's Ed was still offered and they put the hand controls on the car so I was able to learn with everyone else. You will need to contact your local driving school to see what they offer. Along with this it is important to be able to get in and out of the car without help. I need to sit on a cushion and have one behind me when I drive.
- Burns: If there's little or no feeling in the lower extremities burns are something to be aware of because the skin is very sensitive so make sure bath and shower water isn't too hot.
- Pressure Sores: As I already mentioned the skin where there is no feeling is very sensitive, so sores from prolonged pressure are common and if not taken care of properly they will get infected. I get mine from sitting, so to prevent them I use a Roho Cushion. I highly recommend them. They come in two different thicknesses, 2 inch or 4 inch. Your doctor can tell you which one is best for you.
- To make getting in and out of the tub easier use a stool about the same height as the tub. I believe mine is a Little Tikes that I've had since I was a child.
- To reach things up high use a grabber, they can be ordered online.
- Pulling doors shut: Nail or staple some kind of heavy string or rope on the door to grab and pull the door shut.
- Know how to pump your own gas if you drive.

- Mail: Get a letter from your doctor stating you have a hardship and take it to the Post Office and they will deliver the mail to a mail box at your door.

Living independently takes a lot of planning. You have to think things through, there's a lot of things to factor into everything you do. For example, if you're going out, what's the weather going to be like. Are there bathrooms available, is the place you're going handicap accessible etc.