

## Worksheet: Checking on ADLs and IADLs

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Life tasks are fundamental self-care activities that we either do for ourselves or need someone to do for us.

Professionals usually categorize the key life tasks as Activities of Daily Living (ADLs) and Instrumental Activities of Daily Living (IADLs).

**Activities of Daily Living (ADLs)** are things we learn as very young children, such as walking, self-feeding, dressing, toileting, and bathing.

**Instrumental Activities of Daily Living (IADLs)** are self-care tasks that require higher-order thinking skills and which we usually learn as teenagers, such as managing finances, medication, driving, and house-cleaning.

It's important to spot problems with life tasks. New problems can be a sign of a medical problem that needs attention.

Difficulties with ADLs and IADLs often correspond to how much help, supervision, and hands-on care an older person needs. This can determine the cost of care at a facility, whether someone is considered "safe" to live at home, or even whether a person is eligible for certain long-term care services.

This cheatsheet will help you document functional difficulties, to help you get your aging parent getting the help and support they need.

Check off which of these apply to the older parent (or the older person) you're concerned about. You can also jot down some notes about your specific concerns relating to each.

Be sure to write down the date when you do this, along with your name.

For more information, see: [What are Activities of Daily Living \(ADLs\) & Instrumental Activities of Daily Living \(IADLs\)?](#)

## Any problems with the Activities of Daily Living?

<b>Activity</b> (common problems in parentheses)	Needs NO help	Needs SOME help	Needs FULL help	Notes
<b>Walking and getting around</b> (any difficulty, especially on steps, any tripping on feet, or trouble getting across a room independently)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Dressing</b> (trouble choosing clothes appropriate to weather or event, wearing same clothes over and over, struggling to get clothes on)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Toileting</b> (trouble using the toilet independently or signs of accidents or incontinence)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Bathing</b> (avoiding showers, or trouble bathing independently)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Grooming</b> (forgetting to shave, trouble fixing hair or applying makeup, looking unkempt)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Feeding</b> (not getting food into mouth, difficulty swallowing)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Transferring</b> (difficulties moving from bed to chair/wheelchair, or from sitting to standing, or trouble getting in position to use a walker)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

## Any problems with Instrumental Activities of Daily Living?

<b>Activity</b> (common problems in parentheses)	Needs NO help	Needs SOME help	Needs FULL help	Notes
<b>Finances</b> (unopened or unpaid bills, trouble making change)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Transportation</b> (trouble driving, using public transit)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>House-cleaning and chores</b> (unkempt home or yard)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Shopping</b> (lack of food or supplies in house, online buying sprees)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Meal preparation</b> (no longer cooking, dishes in sink)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Using telephone and managing mail</b> (unopened mail, stops answering calls)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Managing medications</b> (not taking as recommended, not refilling regularly)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

**Name of person completing:**

**Date:**

## About Dr. Leslie Kernisan & Better Health While Aging:



Leslie Kernisan, MD MPH, is a practicing geriatrician who believes it should be easier for older adults to have the best possible health and quality of life as they age.

Through her website [Better Health While Aging](https://www.betterhealthwhileaging.net), she provides practical information on how to address many common health problems that affect older adults. She also addresses common concerns and dilemmas related to helping older parents and other aging relatives.

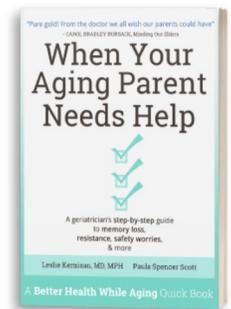
Visit [BetterHealthWhileAging.net](https://www.betterhealthwhileaging.net) to find more useful articles and resources on aging health, family caregiving, and helping older parents.

You can also join us by listening to our free [podcast](#).

## About Dr. Kernisan's Book, *When Your Aging Parent Needs Help: A geriatrician's step-by-step guide to memory loss, resistance, safety worries, and more:*

In this practical step-by-step guide Dr. Kernisan walks you through what to do and what to say to offer respectful assistance and intervention to an aging parent. This book provides a practical and flexible plan to get help for the most common worries, while respecting your parent's dignity and autonomy.

Full of downloadable cheatsheets, tip-sheets, sample scripts, and checklists you can bring to the doctor, this book provides resources that help transform good intentions into workable solutions and improved relationships.



If you're concerned about an aging parent's health, wellbeing, or safety, click [here to learn more](#).