

Work Space Organization

Organize your work area to make life easier.

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY DEPARTMENT

Organize convenient areas to work in:

- Plan work areas related to frequent tasks (eg. woodwork finishing, food preparation, sewing etc)
- Plan your storage and work areas so that the most frequently used items are close by.
- Plan a place to sit and work.
- Organize your counter areas to give you space to work freely and to slide items from one place to another.
- Counters and table tops should be approximately 2 inches below a bent elbow. For fine, detailed work the counter or table may need to be higher. Height adjustable office chairs are a good idea.

Ideas to help organize your storage space:

- Store frequently used and/or heavy items between shoulder and hip height to minimize reaching, bending, and lifting.
- To avoid reaching far back into low cupboards, use pull out shelves or replace shelving with drawers. A Lazy Susan works for higher shelves and for low corner cupboards.
- For easy access, hang items such as tools, pots, pans, and utensils on a pegboard.
- Use baskets to hold groups of small items on higher shelves or in drawers.
- Hang items in a closet or on the wall to avoid bending over to reach for them.
- Leave garbage containers in the open (eg. not in the cupboard below sink) to reduce bending.
- Vertical partitions eg. for cookie sheets
- Mixer shelf - spring-loaded device that swings an appliance shelf (with the appliance on it) out of your lower cabinets and then locks it at a convenient height.
- Get rid of anything you no longer use!

Other Suggestions:

Lifting/Carrying

- Use a wheeled cart to transport item (eg. tools, parts, dishes, food, laundry, documents).
- Place heavy items on castors to make moving them around easier (eg. planters, garbage bins).
- Slide items whenever possible.

Reaching

- Use a foot stool to reach high cupboards.
- Use a long handled reacher or tongs to reach for objects.

Standing

- Stand with one foot elevated to a comfortable level eg. on a footstool or lower shelf of a cupboard.
- Change position frequently.

Sitting

- Use an adjustable chair. A good office chair will provide good back support and will allow you to adjust the height. This gives you more options to change your position depending on the task you are doing.
- Have some work counters placed at lower heights. These may be fold-away or pull out (eg. like pull out cutting boards)