

This works too

Teaching practical skills to blind and severely visually impaired children and adolescents



BARTIMEUS SERIES

Bartiméus aims to record and share knowledge and experience about the capabilities of people with visual impairments. The Bartiméus series is one of the ways they do this.

Colophon

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Foreword

This book is for parents and carers of infants, toddlers and children, but also for adolescents and young adults. The text deals with the functioning of children and adolescents in the field of practical self-reliance at different stages of life, from dependence during infancy/toddlerhood to independence in adolescence. It's about discovering how things work, about cause and effect, about showing, doing things together and independently, about gaining experience and expanding horizons, and it's about how this all fits in with a child's developmental phase, the expectations of the parents, the immediate environment and society. The book covers the systematic learning of skills such as learning to dress, finding a new packet of biscuits in a cupboard, doing the shopping and learning to make tea. The result will be self-reliance, appropriate to the age and capabilities of the child or adolescent.

This book isn't about how things must be done, but about how they can be done. After all, everyone has their own ideas about bringing up children, and everyone is affected by different circumstances.

Together with parents or the adolescent, we can find out what the child is already capable of doing and then think together about what he or she can learn in a following step. This is all intended to help children or adolescents to experience who they are, what they can do and who they want to be in order to take the place in society that best suits them.

The authors work at Bartiméus and have years of experience in assisting blind and visually impaired children, young people and parents/carers.

This is a completely revised version of the previously published booklets *This works too* and *Zo gaat het verder*.

Guide

Wherever parents are mentioned, this can also be taken to mean grandparents, carers or rehabilitation therapists. Wherever 'he' is used, you can also read 'she'.

If you come across concepts that you would like to know more about, please contact Bartiméus.

In the Netherlands, we have started making short, simple films that clarify the instructions given in the text.

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1 Dressing and undressing



What might a child find hard about getting dressed? What will he need to be able to do that independently?

What is difficult and what helps? A child who sees little or nothing can't easily watch how things are done. Therefore, all of the senses should be involved, and more time should be taken to practice, or further explanation given if necessary. A child needs the opportunity to do things for himself. That takes patience and time, for both the parents and the child. Therefore, it's best to start on a weekend or during the holidays. Repetition also helps a lot.

Undressing

- Undressing is easier than dressing, so it's a good idea to start with this first.
- As far as possible, try to prevent the child from pulling his clothes off inside out. Tell him how to prevent this happening, and do it together.
- Always lay clothes out in the same place, for example on a chair. That saves time in searching. Put shoes under the chair and socks inside the shoes.

Dressing

- Make a pile of clothes. The item of clothing that has to be put on first should go on top of the pile. If the child takes clothing out of the cupboard, make sure that it is within reach and clearly sorted.
- A label on the inside of the collar or a decoration on the front of a jumper makes it clear which is the front or back of the garment. There is often a label inside on the left hand side of a shirt, t-shirt or jumper.
- A jumper can be laid face down on the bed. The child can then put it on by putting his arms in the sleeves and pulling the jumper on over his head.
- Some children don't know how to start putting on a jacket. Put the hood on the child's head; this gives him an orientation point.
- It's useful if the child knows which clothing he's wearing, so that, for example, while changing after sports class, he can either find his clothing or describe it (colour, material).
- Learning to close a zip takes a lot of time. Practice this at a quiet moment during the day and not right before the school bell is due to ring. If his jacket is lying on the table, the child can better see and/or feel it.
- It can be useful to mark the left and right shoes if the child is not yet able to tell the difference between the two.
- It's possible to get sets of colour indicating buttons that can be used to label or sort clothing according to what goes together. The sets can be bought from suppliers of aids for the blind and visually impaired.
- Teach the child to ask whether his clothes are neat and whether there are any spots or stains visible.
- You can keep jewellery, scarves and other accessories together with an outfit, or sorted properly and stored in baskets or boxes.



Tying shoelaces

- Teach the child to tie his shoelaces in small steps.
- For visually impaired children, use two shoelaces with varied, contrasting colours. Knot these together and tie them around the top of the leg, for example.
- For a blind child, it's useful to use two shoelaces of different material knotted together, such as a flat shoelace and a round one, so that he can feel how the two laces get tangled together and what a knot is.
- When making the first knot, wrap one lace an extra time around the other. This will make the first knot stay nice and tight.
- Another method is to tie a single knot, make a loop out of both lace ends and then tie these loops in a knot.



Tidying up your clothes

- Encourage the child to help with tidying up his clothing from an early age.
- Together with him, you can create a fixed layout for his clothes in the closet, making sure that there aren't too many clothes and that the layout is clear.
- Use baskets that feel different.
- Put the most used items at touch level for a blind child and eye level for a visually impaired child.
- Shelves can be labelled with braille on adhesive tape, brightly coloured stickers or pictures.
- If the child has some remaining vision, discuss with the occupational therapist whether lighting can be improved.
- You can hang top and trousers sets together. Sets of underwear can be folded together.
- Attach socks to each other with a safety pin or sock clamp when putting them into the washing basket. Hang pairs of socks together to dry, and then pair them up afterwards using a sock clamp or by folding them together. Socks can be kept together in a sock basket or a shoebox.

Practice suggestions

- You can practice different types of clothing fastenings with Montessori materials such as dressing frames, but also with dress up clothes or vests you make yourself. There are also doll's clothes with fastenings, and of course you can also have the child practice on your own jacket or shoes.
- Some children get dressed quicker if you make a competition of it. Setting the timer on your telephone or a kitchen timer can help. Do a live report of the event to increase the fun!

2 Self-care



When can a child shower himself? What will he need to be able to do that independently? What is difficult and what helps? A child who sees little or nothing can't easily watch how things are done. Therefore, all of the senses should be involved, and more time should be taken to practice, or further explanation given if necessary. A child needs the opportunity to do things for himself. That takes patience and time, for both the parents and the child. Therefore, it's best to start on a weekend or during the holidays. Repetition also helps a lot.

The following are some basic skills for children, followed by recommendations for young adults.

Washing

- A child will need to know where he can find the necessary items, such as clean towels. He will also need to know where to put his dirty laundry and where he can lay out his clean clothes.
- The child will need to know where the tap is and how to use it. A mixer tap with a thermostat is both user-friendly and safe. If the hot and cold water come out of a single tap, it's safest to first turn on the cold tap and then the hot one. When turning off the tap, first turn off the hot one.
- Where is the shampoo, and how can a child recognise the bottle? Is the shower gel bottle a different shape to the shampoo bottle, for example? This is a handy way for a child to be able to tell them apart.
- Shampoo in a bottle with a pump or in a dispenser is sometimes easier to use and is simpler to dose.
- Squeezing out a washcloth is also something that not every child will learn by himself. He will learn this by watching and imitating others. A blind or visually impaired child will need to be taught this more explicitly, by carrying out the action of squeezing together with you, with one hand turning in the opposite direction to the other.

Toothbrushing

- Squirtting a little bit of toothpaste directly out of the tube onto the teeth is a good way of preventing mess. If you do this, it's a good idea to give the child his own personal tube of toothpaste. The tube can be made easily recognisable by choosing one with a differently shaped lid. A flip top lid is a good idea, as this won't get lost. However, if the tube has a screw cap, the child can let it fall into the basin where it will be easy to find again.
- For a visually impaired person, coloured toothpaste is easier to see on a white toothbrush, as is white toothpaste on a coloured brush.
- How will a child be able to recognise his own toothbrush if he can't see colours? Make sure that his toothbrush is tangibly different from the others.
- Teach a child how to rinse his toothbrush properly so that no toothpaste residues remain.
- Have the child lean forward slightly over the basin so that the toothpaste falls into the basin and not onto his clothes
- A dental hygienist can provide you with a good cleaning plan.

Going to the toilet

- What will a child need to know if he has to go to the toilet in an unfamiliar environment? Visually impaired children will need to know where the light switch is. A child will also have to find out how the lock works, where the toilet paper is and how the toilet can be flushed. It's best if he can be told about all of this beforehand. Encourage the child to ask for this information if he needs to use an unfamiliar toilet.
- Teach boys about the option of sitting down to pee. This will prevent a lot of mess.
- Putting a piece of toilet paper in the toilet bowl will prevent skid marks.
- Young children may find flushing the toilet scary because they can't see what's happening. Give them time to get used to this and to explore how the toilet works in their own way. Tell them when you're about to flush the toilet. Right after the toilet has been cleaned, perhaps let them splash around a little and discover how it all works.
- Bottom wiping: encourage the child to measure out a specific length of toilet paper. This could be an arm's length, for example, or measured to a certain ridge on the wall. Show him how to tear the paper off the roll by holding the roll still with the other hand. Fold the paper up rather than scrunching it up into a ball. Bottom wiping can also be practiced with clothes on. Doing a dry run like this gives you plenty of time to explain how the paper should be folded. You also won't need to stand in the bathroom for this, so you'll have more room to move.
- It's a good idea for a child to carry a package of paper tissues with him for wiping with. It often happens that the toilet roll is empty. Even if there's a loose roll present, this may be hard for a blind person to find.
- At home, teach the child where the new toilet rolls are, and how to replace a toilet roll in the dispenser.

Eye care

- If a child needs to use eye drops, discuss with him when this should take place and choose a set time of day. You can refer to the Bartiméus eye drop booklet 'I like it this way!'. See www.bartimeus.nl
- If several people in your home use eye drops, mark the bottles to prevent confusion.
- If a child has a prosthetic eye, remind him that his eye will need to be cleaned from time to time. This is easy to do with an alcohol-free wet wipe (for example, a moist toilet wipe with aloe vera). Using a dry cloth will cause dryness/chapping to the eyelids and corners of the eye. Explain to the child why cleaning his eye is necessary.
- Teach a child to clean his glasses using a special fabric cleaning cloth. You can also buy moist wipes for glasses.

Nose blowing

- Tell a blind or visually impaired child that he should turn away from other people if he sneezes or needs to blow his nose. Teach the child to cough or sneeze into the crook of his elbow. This will prevent him from getting germs on his hands.

Tips for adolescents

Using deodorant

- A deodorant roller or stick can be easier to use than a spray, as there is direct contact with the skin. When using a spray, there's always the danger of missing the armpit.

Shaving

- It's important to approach shaving systematically. Feel your whole face afterwards to make sure you've covered everything.
- Magnifying shaving mirrors can be useful for the visually impaired.
- When purchasing a shaver, it's a good idea to ask how the device should be cleaned.

Make-up

- A general recommendation for using make-up is to use soft tones so that it's not immediately obvious if the make-up isn't perfectly applied. A systematic approach applies here too, so that you don't miss any spots.
- Special cleaning cloths are the easiest way of cleaning your face.
- Coloured day creams obscure irregularities and give a smooth complexion.
- You can apply blusher by feeling your cheekbones and then brushing two or three times with a wide powder brush over your cheek. Practice the brushing action with two fingers next to each other.
- Eyeshadow in soft colours and natural tones with a hint of glitter give a beautiful effect, and you can't really go wrong with them. Apply eyeshadow to your upper eyelid using your fingertips.
- Mascara: use a mascara with a short shaft, or cover the shaft up to the brush with a cotton pad. Hold the brush beneath your upper eyelashes. Blinking three times is sufficient. See www.oogverblindendmooi.nl
- You can also have your eyelashes dyed by a beauty specialist.
- A nail studio can cut and polish your nails for you.
- You can choose to have someone else do your make-up, or ask someone else if your make-up looks good.

Nail care

- Hands are conspicuous when touch is important. Long nails with dirt under them are not attractive, but how do you know whether your nails are dirty, and how do you clip them when you can't see them? Using a nail brush and a good nail file regularly can help.
- You can use a nail clipper for trimming your nails, but it isn't very easy to use one of these by touch. Clipping your nails after showering is easier because the nails are softer. Another handy trick is to soak your hands in a bowl of lukewarm water with a little added oil.
- If you are visually impaired, you can always hold your hands closer to your eyes in order to be able to see them better. However, this is a more difficult with your feet. You will either need to care for your feet by touch, or ask someone to help you. You can also go for a pedicure.

Menstruation

- As a blind or visually impaired girl, you need to be extra well prepared for menstruation. You will need to know about good hygiene, how to use pads, panty liners, tampons and disposable bags, and what to do when you can't find any disposable bags. You'll also need to know how to carry the package unobtrusively to a rubbish bin if there isn't one in the toilet.
- From the start, you need to learn to listen to your body's signals. It often takes a little while before you know which physical and emotional signs indicate that you are about to menstruate.
- It's a good idea to use panty liners as soon as you feel that menstruation is approaching. This is a good precaution: better three days too early than an hour too late. It's also wise to change your pad or tampon frequently, so that there's less risk of leakage.
- Before and during menstruation, you can wear dark pants or a skirt, or a shirt or jersey that falls over your buttocks. This will make any leakage less visible.
- Set a reminder for yourself in your telephone about when menstruation has started, and when you expect your next period. This will help you to keep track.
- Keeping a spare pair of underpants in your school bag will also give you a feeling of security.

Practice suggestions

- You can learn to wash and brush hair in a playful manner by learning and practicing on a doll.
- Clipping nails: first practice using a nail clipper on fingers made from paper, so that you can learn how the clippers work.
- Arrange a nail/handcare workshop that teaches all aspects of nail filing and hand care.

3 Food



What kind of difficulties might a blind or visually impaired child experience during mealtimes? What is necessary for him to learn to spread, cut and pour independently?

What is difficult and what helps? A child who sees little or nothing can't easily watch how things are done. Therefore, all of the senses should be involved, and more time should be taken to practice, or further explanation given if necessary. A child needs the opportunity to do things for himself. That takes patience and time, for both the parents and the child. Therefore, it's best to start on a weekend or during the holidays. Repetition also helps a lot.

Sandwiches



Spreading

- Learning to spread toppings on bread can be time-consuming. Practice every day with at least one slice of bread; that adds up to 365 practice slices per year!
- Choose a moment when you have time to teach a child how to spread his bread himself. Doing the action together will make the movement clearer for him. Tell him clearly what the action involves, and react verbally to what the child is doing.

- A child can find out if he's holding the knife properly by 'cutting' on the edge of his plate. If he's holding the knife properly, he should hear the noise the serrations make.
- Halvarine is often soft and falls off the knife. Let the child experiment with different butter and margarine types. Which one spreads the easiest and tastes the best? Lätta is a good option.
- A good method is to gently scrape the knife twice over the surface of the butter and then carefully test how much butter is on the knife with the tip of your pinky finger.
- Don't be too quick to pass a child everything. Let him search for things on the table himself. He can avoid knocking things over by carefully moving his hand over the surface of the table.
- Make sure you always put items in the same place on the table; this will make it easier for him to find things. For example, you could put sweet spreads together in a basket or on a tray.
- Put the lids back on jars after use; this will prevent the child putting his hand in the jam when he goes to pick up the jar.
- The child can determine the contents of a jar by the feel of the different lids. Apply braille labels to the lids of jars and save these lids for use on new jars. If you do this, make sure you always buy the same brand in the same kind of jar!
- Jam and sprinkles can be put in a jar. A child will then be able to use a spoon to put the topping on his bread. A spoon is a fixed size, so it's easier to control the amounts. Using a plastic spoon, which is light, makes it easier to feel the weight of the amount in the spoon.
- Visually impaired and blind children will often touch their sandwich, getting their fingers greasy or sticky. Placing a serviette, paper napkin or a damp wipe next to the plate will give a child the opportunity to clean his hands.
- Try various methods of spreading to see which one works the best. For example, try spreading from the top right to the bottom left, and from top left to bottom right. Preferably put the slice of bread on a flat surface, such as a bread board.
- An effective means for a child to practice spreading is to do it on his hand. By making the spreading movement over his hand with a clean knife, the child will learn how to hold the knife and find out how much pressure he needs to apply.
- Spreading slices of gingerbread or toast is good practice as these are less inclined than fresh bread to break while being spread.



Cutting

- Cutting is generally easier to do on a wooden chopping board or a flat plate.
- Start simply, for example by having a child cut slices of crustless bread or pieces of gingerbread.
- Bread comes in different types and shapes; try to find a good orientation point on the bread from which the child can cut it.



Pouring

- A child can practice pouring while playing in the bath, in a washing-up bowl or while standing on a stool at the kitchen worktop. Give different cups, mugs, jugs and milk cartons to experiment with.
- Use half-litre milk cartons to start with; these are less heavy and have a good pouring spout that you can rest on the edge of a cup. You can do the same with a small jug with a spout.
- Use dairy cartons with a screw cap, as these are easier to use than a pouring spout that has to be folded out.
- A child can use his finger to feel whether the cup is full. Some children are also able to tell by listening.
- Distinguish between different dairy cartons by marking them, for example by putting a paperclip on the top of one carton, and an elastic band around another.
- You can make use of contrasting colours for visually impaired children, for example by pouring milk into a blue cup and tea into a white one.
- There are devices that give off a beep tone when the liquid being poured reaches the pins of the device. These fluid level indicators are hung on the inner edge of the cup, and can be obtained from home care shops or suppliers of aids for visually impaired and blind people.
- If you use a thin porcelain cup, you can also feel on the outside of the cup whether it's full, or whether the drink in the cup is still hot.
- By putting sugar cubes in the cup first and then pouring the drink, you can avoid getting the sugar spoon wet or being splashed with hot liquid when the cubes fall in the tea or coffee.

Peeling

- Introduce a child to fruit with and without peel, and practice the act of peeling.

Hot meals

Serving

- Teach a child to serve himself. Put his plate against the pan, use the spoon to feel where the food is in the pan, and scoop it up. Tilt the spoon low above the plate to prevent spatters. First do this yourself to demonstrate, then do it together with the child, and finally have the child do it for himself.
- The child can practice the action of spooning things out, for example in his sandbox, using various vegetable and sauce spoons. Teach the child to first feel along the stem to the bowl of the spoon to check whether the bowl is straight and he is holding the spoon correctly before using it to serve up.
- By comparing the child's plate with a clock, you can establish a fixed system for serving food. For example, the meat goes at number 12, the vegetables at 9

and the potatoes at 3. This will help the child to orient himself and teach him where to find things.



Cutting

- Cutting meat requires a lot of space: it can therefore be useful to first cut the meat up and then serve the rest of the food. Ensure that the child has a large enough plate.
- Right-handed children can stick the fork into the meat on the left hand side and use the knife to feel where the tines of the fork are. Cut along the tines of the fork and then eat the cut piece of meat. This method means a child does not have to move the fork.



Cutlery

- If you use lightweight cutlery, a child will more easily be able to feel whether there is something on his spoon or fork.
- A child can learn to stick his fork into hard food items and slide softer food onto his spoon.
- Young children often hold cutlery in their fists which means the food often falls off. Teach a child how to hold cutlery properly and explain what happens. For example: 'The tip of your spoon is pointing too far up. Now your food is falling off.'
- If the child has finished eating, encourage him to systematically check his plate to ensure that nothing has been left behind. He can stop if there is nothing on his spoon after doing this a couple of times.
- Teach a child that he has to bring his food to his mouth with the cutlery, not the other way around. If you pay attention to this at an early enough age, the child will learn the best way to sit while eating.

Practice suggestions

- Learning to scoop and hold a spoon straight: Have the child scoop dry rice from one container into another, with a tray underneath. The sound of the falling rice will immediately give the child feedback about whether his spoon is correctly positioned. Encourage the child to try different spoons, such as a spoon with a round or flat stem, a deep bowl, or a large and small spoon.
- If there's no soup available to practice spooning liquids, use soft drink instead. Most children will enjoy this.
- Spreading bread: You can practice the spreading action easily by using green soap (out of a round jar) as butter and spreading it on a sponge, which stands in for the bread. The sponge can be repeatedly rinsed clean and you won't need to use huge amounts of bread and butter.
- Have the child help make the whole family's lunches for the week, and freeze the packages. This will give him plenty of opportunity to practice.
- Cutting: a child can cut old pieces of bread into cubes and use them to feed the ducks.

- If he finds cutting difficult, first practice with soft modelling clay or kinetic sand.
- Making a fruit salad will give the child lots of opportunity to cut foods.
- Pouring: practice at the kitchen worktop, in the bath and outside in the garden if the weather's nice, so that spills don't matter. Put water into a small, empty milk carton with a screw cap lid, and try out different kinds of bottles and jugs as well.

4 Preparing coffee and tea and other household tasks



What might a child find hard about household tasks? What will he need to be able to do these tasks independently?

What is difficult and what helps? A child who sees little or nothing can't easily watch how things are done. Therefore, all of the senses should be involved, and more time should be taken to practice, or further explanation given if necessary. The child needs the opportunity to gain experience. That takes patience and time, for both the parents and the child. Therefore, it's best to start on a weekend or during the holidays. Repetition also helps a lot.

Making coffee

- Measuring the amount of water in the reservoir can be difficult, because water does not give contrast. Tactile labels can be stuck on the inside of the reservoir. Another method is to measure out the required number of cups of water in the coffee jug, and use this to fill the reservoir. A Senseo or espresso machine is easier because these make one cup of coffee at a time.
- If it's difficult to see how much water is left in the reservoir, put a clean, new ping-pong ball in the water – this will make it easier to see where the water level is.
- Biscuits are often offered along with coffee – these are easier to hand out from a tin than from a plate.



Making tea

- A kettle that can be detached from a base with electrical cord is practical and safe.
- Resting the kettle spout gently on the edge of the teapot makes it easier to pour water into the teapot.
- Let the teapot stand in the sink, then little can go wrong. For right-handers: place the teapot as far left as possible, so that there's still room for the kettle. For left-handers, this should be the other way around. If boiling water pours down the outside of the teapot, this will land safely in the sink.
- Practice pouring water in and out of the teapot. Start with cold water, and practice with increasingly hotter water.
- Pour boiling water into the teapot and then put the teabag in. This will prevent the teabag disappearing into the teapot, string, label and all. Conversely, when making tea in a glass it's better to put the teabag into the glass first and pour the water on top of the teabag; as the water gets darker, you will be able to see how much more water you need to pour in.
- A small rubbish container on the worktop is handy for the used teabags.
- You can also introduce a child to loose tealeaves, a tea egg, herbal tea, a tea cosy and a tea-light. Explain that a teabag drips when it comes out of the pot, so it needs to drain in a cup or on a little dish before going into the rubbish.

Gas stove

- When learning how to use matches, it's important to know what's going to happen. Take your time and practice calmly. Put a container of water nearby that the match can go into after being used.
- Most gas stoves nowadays have electrical ignition. If that isn't the case, then proceed as follows: turn the gas on low, strike the match and then find the stove grid with your hand. Move the burning match past the grid towards the burner. You will hear the burner flame ignite. You can also use a gas lighter.

Setting the table

- Laying a tablecloth on a round table is more difficult than on a square table. You can use your hand to check whether the same amount of cloth is hanging over the edges on all sides.
- You can tell whether the cloth is the right way up by feeling the seam. Place mats are another easy option. You can check that they're straight by comparing them to the edge of the table.
- If the right number of chairs are placed around the table, a child can place a plate in front of each chair. This is easier if he stands behind the chair.
- When putting out cutlery and glasses, the plate can serve as an orientation point.
- For the visually impaired, use plates in contrasting colours on a plain tablecloth, pour milk into a dark coloured cup and use glasses with pictures on them or coloured rims.



Washing up and drying, dishwashing machine

- What is hard about washing up? You can't see whether something is clean or not, so you have to feel it instead. Washing up works best under water and with a scouring sponge or a short washing up brush. Using a brush with a short handle makes it easier to control, and your hand is closer to the object you're washing. There are also washing up brushes with a suction cup that can be secured in the sink.
- Teach a child how to make soapy water. Put a little dishwashing liquid in his hand – this makes it clearer how much needs to go in the water.
- Put cups and pans upside down in the drying rack.
- Before starting to dry up, make sure there's some space to stack the dry items, or put them away immediately.
- A young child can start out with an easy washing up task, such as washing his own tableware or the cups.
- Help older children to learn about the whole process too: rinsing out the washcloth, drying the worktop, putting away the drying rack, wiping the tiles and stove, hanging up the tea towel or putting it in the laundry, throwing away the washing up water without spilling any on the floor, tidying away the washing up bowl and cleaning the drain, wringing out the dishcloth and putting it away or putting it in the laundry.
- Another possibility is to use the Scandinavian method: first wash the dishes, then rinse them with lukewarm water. Instead of drying them by hand, leave them in the dish rack to drip dry.
- A dishwasher is easier, but loading and unloading it can be tricky. The child will need to become familiar with it. Start with unloading the machine, and then afterwards practice loading it with clean dishes so that the child can properly feel the position of the dishes in the machine without getting dirty hands.

Tidying own room

- A child will only understand what 'tidying your own bedroom' means if he gets the opportunity to do that regularly with his parents. Name the tasks and discuss the most practical way of going about it together.
- Encourage a child to express his own ideas about where something should be kept.
- Storing items in different boxes or baskets in different colours and/or materials can help to keep things organised. Attach an image or object to the outside of the basket to make clear what is in it.
- Changing a duvet cover can be difficult. You can open out the side seams of the duvet cover by 20 or 30 cm at the foot end. You can then stick your hands through the holes to grasp the corners of the duvet, after which you can shake the cover down over the duvet.

Tip for adolescents

- If you're living alone, buy a small dish rack if you don't expect to have much washing up to do. A large dish rack limits your space on the worktop.

Practice suggestions

- You can use role play to give a child a variety of tasks. Children often enjoy playing a role, and by doing this they won't get the idea that they're practicing something in the meantime.
- Invent a story with different roles and tasks. For example, it could be a story about a family of bears who get up in the morning, comb their hair, clean their teeth and make their breakfast of cornflakes and sugar.
- With a group of children, it can be fun to create an 'obstacle course' with tasks. For this, you can also come up with all kinds of tasks that children will need to do in turn or in pairs, such as hanging up washing, changing a rubbish bag, cleaning shoes, etc.
- Washing a plastic doll's tea set can be a fun exercise.
- Setting the table: You can play the game 'the Queen is coming to visit' to practice setting the table stylishly with tablecloth and glasses.
- Vacuuming: if you scatter rice on the floor before vacuuming, you will clearly hear that the vacuum cleaner is sucking something up. It also makes a nice rattling noise.
- Carry out simple tasks with older children/teenagers, such as making a toasted sandwich, preparing a cup-a-soup in a mug, or frying an egg.
- Practice for mother's day or father's day breakfast: squeeze some oranges, bake some bread rolls, make coffee and tea, cook some eggs.
- Try making a simple dessert such as instant pudding or 'vlaflip', a Dutch type of trifle.

5 Doing the shopping



What might a child find hard about doing the shopping? What will he need to be able to do that independently? What is difficult and what could help?

A child who sees little or nothing can't easily watch how things are done.

Therefore, all of the senses should be involved. More time should be taken to practice, or further explanation given if necessary. A child needs the opportunity to gain experience at his own pace. That takes patience and time, for both the parents and the child.

For someone who is blind or visually impaired, independently doing the shopping in a supermarket is usually more difficult than in a smaller shop where you receive personal help. For this reason, we'll start by looking at the choice of shop.

Thereafter, we'll deal with the basic skills for children and finally we'll make some recommendations for young adults and older.

Shops: which ones and why?

Shops can be chosen on the basis of a number of different criteria, including quality, good prices, accessibility and helpfulness. Helpfulness in particular can play an important role. It can be nice to visit particular shops regularly, as the shopkeeper and staff know that you will come back again and will be prepared to do more to help you. An open attitude and taking the initiative to ask for help can assist in this. Some supermarkets are willing to have a staff member go around with you to help you find the items you need. There's no harm in asking the branch manager about this.

Nowadays, you can also order many things online and have them delivered to you at home. Various supermarkets have a home delivery service. They usually apply a minimum purchase amount, and there may also be service costs. It's also often possible to order your shopping online and then pick it up yourself. Your order list is stored so that you have less searching to do the next time.

Despite these convenient facilities, we can't completely avoid having to go into shops. The preparations for this will be very important, such as knowing what you need, knowing what you have in your wallet, and having a useful shopping bag with you. Consider taking items along that you can use to immediately mark the products, such as elastic bands and braille labels, so you know what's in each can or packet when you get home.

Going to the shop

- Children learn a great deal by imitating, so think about what you want a child to learn, and then demonstrate that. An example is giving a greeting when entering a shop. If you can't see well or at all, a greeting is a good way to find out whether the salesperson is there and where he is.
- Some children need to take smaller steps to learn something. Standing back in the shop and letting the child buy something is a possible intermediate step.
- Good preparation increases the likelihood of success: you can practice what the child will say, checking what he has in his wallet and deciding what to do if the item he's looking for isn't available. Discuss this before leaving home.
- What is the route to the shop like? Blind children and their parents have to take into account the fact that the journey to the shop must be undertaken on foot, and you can't just jump on your bike. The distance to and the accessibility of the shop are therefore important things to bear in mind. Consider using public transport and find out whether there's a bus that stops near the supermarket.
- A child will need to learn how to do the shopping alone. He can first learn to ask for something, find something, pay for his shopping, etc. After that, he can learn how to go to the shops himself, find the entrance, find a shopping trolley and put the trolley coin into the lock, and so on. Each time you go shopping, you can add a little more of the route. In this way, the child will actually be learning the skill from back to front.
- Teach a child how to find the service desk.

- Praise him for everything that went well. Name the things that could use some extra practice. Put things into perspective by reminding the child that it's a learning process, and that he doesn't have to do everything perfectly the first time.

The supermarket

- Doing the shopping in a supermarket can be more challenging than in a small shop. A child will need to search for products. Teach him through play that you can often discover where things are by thinking logically. Tea can be found near the coffee. Refrigerated display cabinets are usually against the wall. You can also hear the hum of their motors.
- For blind children, searching for things in the supermarket is a time-consuming process. On entering the shop, you can go to the service desk or a checkout to ask someone to accompany you.
- Children sometimes have the feeling that they are the only ones to have to ask questions. If you ask something of the staff while a child is with you, he will hear how you do that.
- Asking questions while shopping gives an impression of greater independence than searching for something for a long time. Use a role-playing game at home to practice asking for help and asking further questions if the initial information is not clear enough.
- At the checkout, it's not pleasant to stand too close to other people in the queue. Half an arm's distance is nice.

Tips and tricks

- Utter a greeting when you walk into a shop such as a baker, butcher or greengrocer's shop. Someone behind the counter will greet you back, so you know which direction to walk in.
- If it's busy in the shop, find out who the last person was to enter the shop and pay attention to when he or she is attended to.
- If the shopkeeper says: 'How can I help you?' and you're not sure who is being addressed, you can clarify this by asking: 'Did you mean me?' Teach a child that it's important to speak clearly and look in the direction of the person to whom he is speaking.
- When doing a lot of shopping, teach a child to ask for help with putting the items into shopping bags. When buying only a few items, you can count these to check that all of the items have been picked up from the checkout or display counter. You can always ask, too.
- In order to orient yourself in the shop, it's necessary to interpret the sounds you hear. For example, the humming of the freezer cabinet, the price sticker coming out of the electric scales, the beeping of the cash register and the receipt coming out of it. This will help you to understand what's going on around you in terms of actions and communication (including non-verbal).

Shopping bag

- Make sure you have a strong, practical shopping bag that stays open so you can easily pack your shopping in it. If the bag is too floppy, you won't be able to feel where the opening is.
- Another option is a backpack or a shopping cart. Walking with a stick and a heavy bag in your hand can be very trying.

Tips for adolescents

Wallet and payment

- These days, payments are increasingly done by card. You can make your cards recognisable by sticking something tangible to them, making a small notch in them, or by making a note using braille foil.
- Contactless payment is simple as you don't have to enter a PIN code.
- A wallet with different sections for paper money and one or more sections for coins is practical. Some people find a coin holder useful.
- A wallet should open properly so that the money is easy to recognise and take out.
- It's useful to sort the money so that you can quickly find it. In order to recognise it easily, you can fold paper money in different ways. For example, you could fold a ten euro note twice breadthways, and a fifty euro note once lengthways and once breadthways. You can use any method you like, as long as you remember what you've done. You could also choose to only use ten euro notes. Then you'd know for sure that any note you received in your change must be a five euro note.
- Keep your wallet within reach. If you have a walking stick, you can hang this from your wrist with a strap or elastic while you're paying, so that you have your hands free. When handing the seller money, hold your hand out as far as possible as the counter is usually wide and the seller may not be able to reach you otherwise. Before going out, practice putting your money away smoothly.
- It can be challenging to get both notes and coins back at the same time, as coins can slip out of your hands. You could ask the seller to give you the coins first and then the notes.

Labels

- Sometimes it's necessary to mark purchased items, such as jars or cans, so you can distinguish them from each other. You can use stickers for this, or pieces of plastic braille foil that have been printed with braille text beforehand.
- Another method is to use elastic bands with something attached, such as a button or bead. You can attach these to an item on the spot while shopping.
- A further option is a braille-printed card with a piece of string attached, that you can tie to a bottle. These cards can also be reused.

- Another possibility is the use of label readers such as PennyTalks, which lets you tag items and is comparable to the Penfriend. More information is available from suppliers of aids for the blind and visually impaired.

Apps

- The Albert Heijn app allows you to create a shopping list that follows the layout of the shop. This app is unfortunately not yet available with voice control.
- There are shopping list apps that can be used with voice recognition, such as Courzeo.
- TapTap See, Be My Eyes and KNFB reader are also apps that could be useful for shopping. The latter is expensive, but very functional. For iPhone and iPad, there is the Aipoly Vision, a free app that recognises and names objects.
- The Money Reader app can recognise notes of currency.
- For more information about these apps, see Chapter 7.

Practice suggestions

At home

- Role-play shopping together: take turns playing shopkeeper and customer. How do you ask for something? How do you thank someone? What do you do if the thing you want to buy isn't available? Practice recognising products. Have a child unpack the shopping bag. What goes in the cupboard and what goes in the refrigerator? This will help a child learn where things are and how they look/feel. You will also gain insight into what a child knows about where things can be found at home.
- Some toy cash registers (Intertoys) have a conveyor belt and scanner. This enables a child to learn through play how a conveyor belt works and how products are scanned (beeping noises made by the scanner).
- Practice paying at home in peace and quiet. Start by sorting the coins and searching for the coins required to make up certain amounts. Choose a useful wallet that opens easily; zips can often be tricky. Sort the money well using the different sections.
- Teach a child how to hold out his hand to give or receive money, bearing in mind that a display counter can often be quite wide.
- Try various types of shopping bag and choose the best one to take along with you. Practice putting things in the bag. For example, a bag of sugar, a packet of biscuits, a bottle, a carton of eggs: what should you put in the bottom of the bag, and what goes on top?

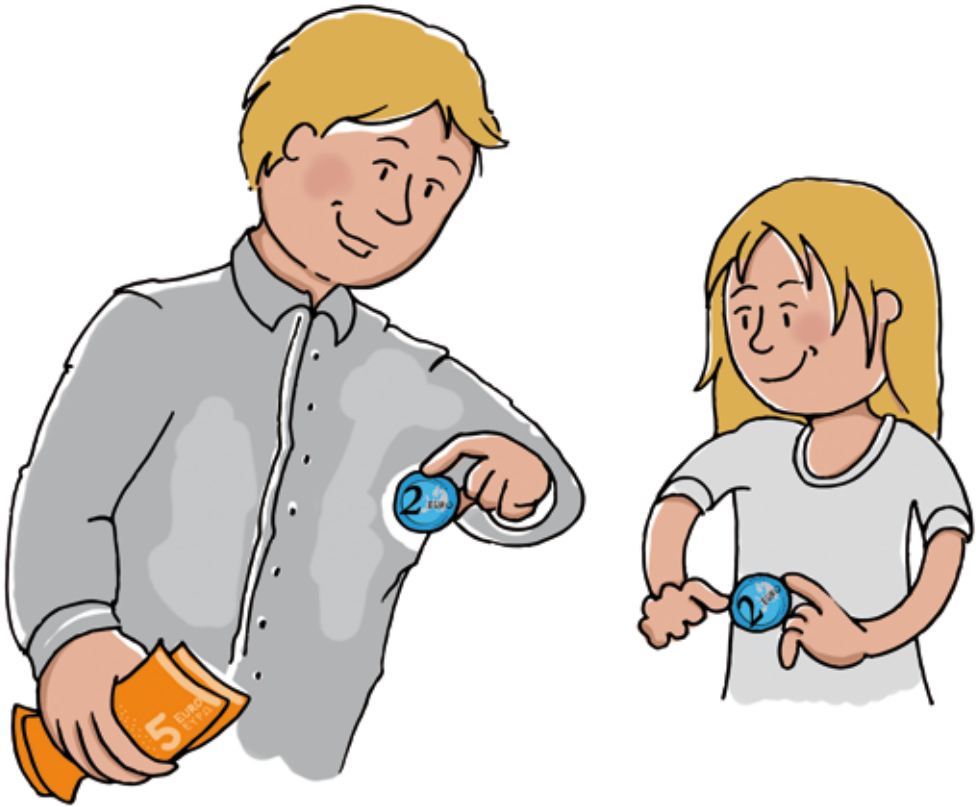
In a shop

Start out with a simple shop, such as the bakery or butcher. Give a child the task of buying one or two things.

In the supermarket

- The first time you go, try to make a sort of map together. Walk through the supermarket and name out loud the items you walk past. You can make a voice recording of this. First walk past the walls. Listen to the sound of the refrigerated cabinets. Encourage a child to touch items and guess what they are. Also encourage him to guess what the sounds are that he can hear around him: where do you hear the cash registers?
- Teach him how to ask questions: how do you recognise the shop assistants? Where can you find the staff of the shop? Teach a child to keep asking questions if the information he receives isn't clear. Role-play things like asking questions, standing in a queue and moving up in line.

6 Money matters and administration



This chapter is primarily intended for young adults and adults. How can someone who is severely visually impaired or blind keep up with money matters, administration and mail? What is necessary to be able to do that independently? What is difficult and what helps? When withdrawing money from a cash machine, one of the difficulties is that each bank has a different screen layout. With some machines you can use a headset to switch on the voice function, but this is often not the case. When receiving mail, you're often dependent on someone who can read it out for you, unless you can use a reading scanner. Consider carefully what you would like to do for yourself, and what you would prefer to ask someone to help you with. Being independent is also about deciding for yourself what you would and would not like help with.

Tips and tricks

- There is a lot of information on financial matters on www.nibud.nl.
- Fortunately, many banking tasks can be carried out digitally these days, and banking facilities are accessible via a computer or an app with a braille display or speech function. The ING is very accessible and their app is user-friendly.
- A number of banks have larger random readers, such as the Rabobank. These are free and specially intended for people with a visual impairment.

- Many payments can be settled by direct debit.
- There are various ways of filing letters, receipts, accounts or proofs of purchase. The most important thing is that you create a system that is clear and accessible. This could be a folder with tabs for different categories. Information can be printed in braille on the tabs, or labels can be spoken into a label reader. You could also staple a note in braille to a letter or account.
- The KNFB reader can be used to 'read' documents. It's an expensive app, so check whether your health insurer will reimburse you for this.
- Another option is an app for your telephone, which you use to take a photograph that can then be read out. An example is TapTapSee, and there are others too. You can get the most recent information from the Oogvereniging (Eye Association).

Withdrawing cash

- If you can't see the display on the cash machine well or at all, learn the meaning of the different keys by heart. It's important to be able to find the correction key. You should bear in mind that all cash machines are different.
- You can sometimes still get money over the counter at a bank. This might give you a more secure feeling, and it can be easier through the contact you have with the bank staff. However, this service is being offered less often these days.
- The keyboard of the cash machine is comparable to the keypad on a telephone.
- Find out what number you need to call if you lose your bank card, and put that in your telephone contacts list.
- Contactless payment is simple as you don't have to enter a PIN code
- for amounts up to € 25.

Recognising money

Coins

Value	Colour	Edge
1 cent euro coin	reddish	smooth
2 cent euro coin	reddish	smooth with a groove
5 cent euro coin	reddish	smooth
10 cent euro coin	yellowish	smooth with rough serrations
20 cent euro coin	yellowish	smooth with notches
50 cent euro coin	yellowish	smooth with rough serrations
1 euro coin	grey with yellow edge	interrupted serrations
2 euro coin	yellow with grey edge	fine serrations and the text 'God be with us'

All coins have a European and a national side. The higher the value of the coin, the larger, thicker and heavier it is. There are a couple of exceptions to this:

- The 10 cent euro coin is a little smaller than the 5 cent euro coin.
- The 1 euro coin is a little smaller, thinner and lighter than the 50 cent euro coin.
- The smallest three coins are the same thickness.

Banknotes

Value	Colour	Size
5 euro note	olive green	120 mm x 62 mm
10 euro note	pink	127 mm x 67 mm
20 euro note	blue	133 mm x 72 mm
50 euro note	orange	140 mm x 77 mm
100 euro note	green	147 mm x 82 mm
200 euro note	yellow/brown	153 mm x 82 mm
500 euro note	purple	160 mm x 82 mm

In order to recognise bank notes easily, you can fold them in different ways. For example, you could fold a ten euro note twice breadthways, and a fifty euro note once lengthways and once breadthways. You can use any method you like, as long as you remember what you've done.

- On both sides of the front surface of the new 5, 10 and 20 euro notes, there is a tangible strip of slanted lines. On the new 5 euro note, this strip is contiguous, on the 10 euro note the strip is interrupted once, and on the 20 euro note twice. You can also purchase the Eurocashtest at the disability aids shop. This aid helps you to recognise coins and notes. There is also an app called Money Reader.

Practice suggestions

Use role play to practice the use of coins and bank notes.

7 Smartphones and tablets



Many families use a tablet daily, and sometimes even have more than one. The smartphone is also here to stay.

This is a great development for people who are visually impaired or blind, because these devices are accessible and have many options for adjusting settings to suit personal needs.

Changing the settings

- You can change the background colour (invert colours) by going to settings > general > accessibility. Magnification for reading or viewing images can be set individually. There are also speech options that make menus and many apps much more accessible. In Windows, this is the Narrator, in Apple it's VoiceOver, and Android has TalkBack.
- In practice, the iPhone is still preferable to other smartphones for blind people due to its standard accessibility features. However, development is ongoing and all kinds of updates and new apps are appearing on a regular basis.
- The smartphone has the same system as the tablet. For someone who is blind, a smartphone is easier to operate than a tablet. The smaller surface makes it easier to manage. In general, the touchscreen is easy to use after some practice.

- An external keyboard can be used with an iPhone or iPad, connected wirelessly to the devices through Bluetooth. The braille display can also be connected using Bluetooth. This kind of external keyboard makes typing much easier. In addition to the official Apple keyboards, there are also significantly cheaper keyboards available. In contrast to the Apple keyboards, which have flat keys, there are also keyboards with rather hollow keys that make it easier to put your fingers on the keys. To make some keys easier to find, you can use 'bumpons' (plastic studs with a self-adhesive backing), or fluorescent coloured stickers, for example on the backspace key and on F4, F8 and F12.
- A kid's cover for the tablet is recommended for young children. This is a foam sleeve that protects the tablet in the event it gets dropped or banged against something.
- For visually impaired people, an adjustable display arm is a good addition, so that you can adjust the viewing distance according to individual needs. A good posture and viewing distance can prevent neck and back complaints.

Apps

To use the iPhone and the available apps properly, you will need to know the basic principles of the iPhone.

The following are some apps that are easy to use:

- KNFB reader (around €99) turns printed text into speech. Useful for reading out documents such as menus, or the preparation instructions on a jar or packet in the kitchen. This app is regularly offered at a lower price.
- TapTapSee: this app allows you to photograph an object, after which it will tell you what the object is. You take a photo, and then you receive the photo back with a brief description. The Library button gives you access to your photos on your phone. A brief description can also be given for these photos.
- Aipoly has the same function as TapTapSee.
- Be my eyes: this app seeks contact with an available volunteer who can look with you through the iPhone, for example, if you've dropped something important on the ground and have no idea where it's rolled to. Be aware, however, that the volunteer who is looking along with you can get an impression of the inside of your house this way. Consider whether you would be happy with this, with respect to your privacy.
- There are also apps that you can use when you move from A to B. The smartphone can make use of the GPS system. Thanks to its built-in GPS module and apps such as Viaoptanav, the iPhone can be used when moving from A to B. Similar apps are Navigon (free) and Ariadne.

- Blindsquare informs you about your surroundings and helps with navigation. This app is used a lot by blind and visually impaired people.
- Around Me is a navigation app that is still under development and offers a lot of options.
- Life 360 is an app that family members can use to follow each other. If someone runs into problems, he can be found quickly. The app is free and works with VoiceOver.
- There are a range of public transport apps:
 - Reisplanner (NS) (free);
 - OV9292 (free);
 - OVdelay (free): this app provides you with information about which buses and trains are nearby. This only works if you have location enabled in your smartphone.

Many of these applications are in development, and new apps will also come onto the market. For the latest developments and advice specific to your needs, contact Bartiméus.

8 Cooking



How can someone who is severely visually impaired or blind cook? What will he need to be able to do that independently? What is difficult and what helps? Locating hot pans, knowing when the butter has browned, dispensing seasonings and weighing ingredients all require practice and handy tricks. Information on packaging is often not accessible for people with a visual impairment. Planning tasks requires experience, and you have to know how long you will take to carry out actions. All of your senses need to be engaged, you will need more time and patience, and working in a structured way will be important. Consider carefully what you can and would like to do for yourself, and what can be bought ready-made. Doing things for yourself also means recognising your own limits.

How do you learn to cook?

Most people learn to cook by watching someone else and then trying it for themselves. If you're blind or visually impaired, however, it's often difficult to get the opportunity and space to gain experience in cooking. Terrible accidents can happen in this environment; you can cut your fingers, the kitchen can catch fire, everything will get filthy, and who's to clean that up? Things always take longer

too. In short, understandable objections. Still, the only way to learn how to cook is to try it out for yourself. In practice, it often turns out to be less difficult than expected. Start simply by helping out with cooking and practicing a lot with cutting; a good build-up and a good plan are half the battle. Try to prevent negative experiences by starting out simply. Cutting and peeling will take longer if you can't see well. The most difficult part of cooking is daring to handle hot pans, planning, and keeping a good overview of what you're doing. It's a good idea to choose what you want to practice first.

Unfamiliar concepts

In cookery, many actions and terms are used that people who are born blind do not get to learn naturally. They can't learn by imitation, after all. For example: What is meant by sprinkling, scrambling, stirring, a pinch, a dash, beating an egg? What does it mean to melt butter and tilt the pan to distribute the butter? How do you lift up a lid and then put it upside down?

Kitchen layout

- Ensure your kitchen is clean and tidy so that the kitchenware you need often is easy to get to. Put items in fixed places to reduce search time. If possible, take a photograph of the layout of a kitchen cabinet and stick it to the inside of the cupboard with self-adhesive plastic film, so that others always know where things need to be stored.
- Cupboards and drawers: put the items that are most often used towards the front of the cupboard or drawer, and do not overfill cupboards. Sort the cutlery drawer well and ensure that it does not become overfull.
- Ensure that you have sufficient working space on the worktop: you will need enough room to put all of the items you are using, and enough room next to the stove to put items that have just come off the heat.
- Lay a good heat-resistant mat on the counter for hot pans.
- Lighting and contrasts (for people who are visually impaired): Ensure there is good lighting under the kitchen cupboards, so that light also falls on the worktop. Beware of reflected light on an aluminium worktop. Make use of contrasts, for example with a dark worktop against a light-coloured wall; brightly coloured handles on cupboard doors, brightly coloured wooden spoons or a coloured colander in a white cupboard.
- Marking: canisters can be marked with large letters or braille labels. Seasoning jars can be kept together in a basket. Use different shaped jars to make it easier to recognise the contents, and don't forget to smell them.
- Good equipment: invest in good equipment such as good quality knives, a good pair of scissors and pans with handles that don't get hot.
- Too many disturbing sounds can be distracting while cooking.

What kind of stove?

The pros and cons of gas, electric, ceramic and induction stoves are covered below.

Gas stove

- Pros: you can hear and smell gas. It responds immediately; if you set the gas on high, it's immediately hot, and once it's off, it's off.
- Cons: a naked flame can be dangerous. For example, a pot holder can ignite. Be particularly careful with long hair, wide sleeves or necklaces.

Electric stove

- Pros: it's safe, because there's no naked flame. The hotplate is easy to keep clean. An electric stove often has graduated knobs.
- Cons: The hotplate does not respond immediately and stays hot for longer, which means that something can easily get overcooked. When cooking with electricity, it's important to think ahead: before something boils, the temperature should already be set lower. You can't hear if something is 'almost boiling'; you need to learn through experience. This is difficult for beginning cooks, and takes a lot of guidance at first. You also can't hear whether a hotplate is still on; you will need to check this by feeling the control knobs.

Ceramic stove

- Pros: it's safe, because there's no naked flame. Only the part under the pan gets hot, and the hotplate is easy to keep clean. The hotplate heats up immediately.
- Cons: the hotplate is susceptible to damage. Just one grain of sand is enough to scratch it. The hotplate is made of hard glass, so care should be taken to prevent things falling on it. A ceramic hotplate has no orientation points, as it's a flat plate.

Induction stove

- Pros: it's safe, because there's no naked flame. The bottom of the pan is heated, not the hotplate. Only the food in the pan gets hot, while the pan stays relatively cool. The induction plate is easy to keep clean. The hotplate responds immediately on being switched on.
- Cons: only cooking utensils made from iron, sheet steel – enameled or not – and cast iron are suitable for induction cooking and must have a flat bottom. These items are more expensive to purchase. ATAG has made a 'cooking mat' for induction hotplates called the Pandoer. This has been specially made for visually impaired and blind people. The bright yellow 'cooking mat' helps you to clearly see and feel where you should place the pan. It's made from thick, sturdy silicon and is easy to clean and store.
Baking mats cut to size can help give orientation points on the hotplate.

Tips for using the oven

- By counting the ledges on the inside side of the oven, you can place the rack or baking tray at the right height. Practice this first with a cold oven. Go and stand directly in front of the oven or kneel and hold the baking tray by the sides with two hands. Go to the lowest ledge with the baking tray. Once you have felt that, go a step higher, until you've reached the right height. Slide the tray inwards a little. Move your hands to the front of the baking tray and then push it further into the oven. Use loose sheets of baking paper to line the bottom of the oven, in case the dish you are making leaks or drops crumbs. After use, pull the paper towards you, fold it up and dispose of it. This will help keep your oven cleaner.
- There are various ways of remembering the position of the knob and the corresponding temperature. For example, if the knob is pointing right (3 o'clock) = 100°C, if it's pointing down (6 o'clock) = 200°C, between 3 and 6 o'clock is therefore 150°C, and so on. You can also mark the various temperatures by 50°C intervals using relief paste or bumpons (plastic studs with a self-adhesive backing).

Tips for using the microwave

- The microwave oven is frequently used for warming something up or thawing deep freeze products. You can also use it for cooking. Have someone teach you the principles of using the microwave.
- The height at which the microwave is placed is important. For someone who is visually impaired, eye level is best. For blind people, a height at which they can reach the microwave is good.
- Not all cooking utensils are suitable for the microwave. Bowls can get extremely hot.

Basic cooking skills

Consider carefully beforehand what you would like to learn. Cooking is a broad concept, and people can have very different views about it. The following general principle applies: start simply and try to estimate what you can do and what is achievable.

The preparation and finishing up stages of cooking are generally the most time-consuming. Peeling, cutting and washing vegetables are skills that you won't master immediately; that requires practice. For this reason, many people deliberately choose ready-to-use washed and chopped products. You do pay a little more for these, however. Cleaning up, doing the washing up or loading and unloading the dishwasher also take time and energy.



Tips and tricks for the basic skills

- **Dispensing seasonings.** Sprinkle seasonings into the palm of your hand and feel how much there is. You can season meat by sprinkling the seasonings onto a dry plate and dabbing the meat in them. You can take some salt between thumb and forefinger from a salt cellar; this is called a pinch.
- **Cutting butter.** You will need to learn how to determine the amount of butter to use. A slice of butter about one finger thick is 50 g, and half of that is therefore 25 g. Practice to find out how much you need for frying an egg or a piece of meat.
- **Opening and closing packaging.** Learn how to use scissors effectively. Examine various packages and ask how they can best be opened and perhaps re-closed. Use good clips for closing packages.
- **Opening a can.** Practice with empty tins by cutting the bottom out. There are also cans with ring pull tabs.
- **Weighing and measuring.** Practice using a braille or speaking scale, a braille measuring jug and fixed measures such as a whipping cream carton, cup, tablespoon or teaspoon. A set of measuring spoons is very useful.

- **Dispensing sauce from a bottle.** Ketchup or soy sauce can be poured into an empty jam jar so you can use a sauce ladle or a normal spoon to dispense the required amount.
- **Putting a pan on the gas.** Before you light the gas, put the pan on the right burner. If the pan is still cold, you can check whether it's sitting straight. Feel whether the feet of the pan rack are located at the same distance from the bottom of the pan.
- **Lighting the gas.** If there's no automatic igniter on the stove, it's easiest to ignite the gas using a long gas lighter, also called a candle lighter, with a flame instead of a spark. Stick the igniter under the pan alongside one of the feet of the pan rack, until the point of the igniter touches the burner. Then switch the gas to high and use the igniter to make a flame. Listen carefully to hear whether the gas ignites and check by putting your hand above the pan for a moment. You can feel by the warmth whether you've succeeded in lighting the gas. Always switch off the gas before taking a pan off the burner!
- **Electric/ceramic stove or microwave oven.** Practice with the knobs and with orientation on the hotplate. Perhaps use marking paste or bumpons.
- **Putting a pan on an electric/ceramic stove.** Make sure that the underside of the pan is completely clean and dry. If the bottom of the pan is wet, it will make a sizzling sound that could be confusing when heard among the other cooking sounds. A peel or some other food item under the pan may cause an unpleasant burning smell.
- **Using a kitchen timer.** Make a habit of using one or more kitchen timers. The kitchen timer must be within easy reach. You can keep it in its set place, because you will hear it going off anyway. There are also braille kitchen timers and speaking timers available, but you can very simply alter a kitchen timer with marking paste, or use your mobile telephone, of course.
- **'Locating' a hot pan.** If you can't see the pan, you can feel carefully for the lid with a wooden spatula and then lift the lid with a kitchen glove on. Practice these things cold first, and then hot.
- **Melting and spreading butter.** First practice with a cold pan on the worktop, then with a cold pan on the gas burner, and finally with the gas on. By putting wooden blocks into the pan, you can easily hear what happens when you tilt the pan. Make sure that the pan is always in contact with the surface, so that you don't accidentally put it back on the hotplate crooked. If the hotplate is hot, you can't check with your hands to see whether the pan is straight!
- **Turning meat.** You can practice this using a sponge in a cold pan. A pair of tongs or a spoon and fork can be used to turn the meat.
- **Stirring.** Because a wooden spoon has a round stem, you can't easily feel whether you're holding the spoon correctly or stirring effectively. A spoon with a flat stem is better, or you can file a section of a round stem until it's flat.
- **Using a dishcloth.** Cooking is most enjoyable if you learn to work as cleanly as possible. If you spill something, it's best to clean it up immediately. Kitchen

paper or moist kitchen wipes are useful for this. Practice rinsing and wringing out a cloth.

- **Working systematically.** Put anything you no longer need to one side. This will keep your working area free of clutter and prevent you from knocking things over. It's a good idea to put a knife or wooden spoon down on a plate so you can find it again easily. Rubbish and peels can be collected in a rubbish container on the worktop for throwing into the rubbish bin in one go.

The senses as an aid

Listening

Practice with boiling water; can you hear when it boils? Then melt some butter. When butter is almost melted, it starts to sizzle gently. Once the butter starts to go brown, it sizzles less. Once the sizzling stops, the butter is hot.

Smelling

Your sense of smell can provide you with a lot of information while cooking. It's a good idea to practice this thoroughly. You can often smell when something is cooking too fast or when the potatoes are almost ready. Someone who's paying good attention can distinguish the smell of 'almost burning' or the smell of cooked potatoes. Wave the odour closer to you in order to smell it better.

Planning your cooking

At first, you can verbally practice planning all of the activities and estimating how long your preparations will take. This will give you insight into cooking and into your own ability.

Cooking tips

- First, think about what you need and set it out ready to use. Put the items against the wall behind the worktop so that there's still room to work.
- Lay spoons and other cooking utensils on a plate.
- Wear an apron; it will prevent your clothes getting marked, and you can wipe your hands on it. Wash the apron regularly.
- You can put kitchen gloves in the pocket of the apron so you always have them close to hand.
- Put items you no longer need back where they belong.
- You can drain things using a strainer lid, which is a lid with holes in it that can be clamped onto the pan. You can also use a colander.
- You can cook eggs, pasta or noodles in a pasta basket (a little like a deep frying basket). You can lift up the basket once the contents are cooked, which means you don't need to move around with a pan full of hot water. Put the basket in a bowl next to the pan and tip the pasta out of the basket into the bowl. You can rinse eggs with cold water and then take them out of the basket.

- If you weigh how much rice or macaroni fits into a cup, you will have your own measuring instrument.
- Keep yoghurt and cream cartons as measuring cups for a half, quarter and eighth of a litre.
- There are handy cutting boards with a spout/funnel and raised edge that make it easier to put vegetables into the pan.
- Don't fill the pan too much as this will make it harder to stir, and you'll be more likely to spill. If necessary, use a larger pan.
- If you hold your hand above a pan full of water, you can feel whether the water is boiling: Hold your hand high above the water due to the heat and then let it sink until the point where it's not quite too hot. If your hand gets damp from steam, the water is boiling.
- Use a moist wipe under a pan or bowl as an antislip mat while you're working on the worktop.
- Herbs and spices from jars can first be sprinkled on your hand. Use your thumb and forefinger to dispense them more exactly. It's a good idea to put seasonings in containers or jars with lids that are big enough to put your fingers or a measuring spoon into. Seasoning mixes can be useful.
- When measuring a quantity of oil, you can let the stream run over your finger to feel how much it is. You will feel cold oil more easily than oil at room temperature. For this reason, you should keep your oil in the refrigerator. A dispensing spout that delivers a measured amount is a good idea.
- Extra strong kitchen paper soaks up a lot of oil and moisture.
- You can mark your supply of tins, packets and canisters in the cupboard with stickers or braille labels that you make and stick on yourself, or labels you've attached to elastic bands and therefore can reuse. You can also use label readers or voice buttons. These can also be used on freezer containers and seasoning jars.

Meat preparation tips

- When frying or searing meat, the meat should only be put in the pan once the butter is brown. The butter is brown when the sound of bubbling or sizzling in the pan diminishes, which is easy to hear. The meat should go directly in the pan at that point, so you should have it ready and waiting.
- Special frying butter barely sizzles or not at all, while butter and margarine do.
- Meat can best be fried in a braising pan. The high edges mean less spattering, and turning the meat is easier.
- You can use an anti-spatter lid to prevent spattering.
- A set of tongs is useful for turning meat.
- You can use a wooden or hard plastic spoon to orient yourself to the pan or the middle of the pan. A wooden spoon does not get hot, but it can burn. After using it, put it back on the spoon plate.

- If you have to place or pour something into the pan, you can also do this along the stem of the spoon, so that you know for sure that it will end up in the pan. Hold the spoon upright.
- If several pieces of meat are to be fried, it's easier to do them one by one. Put the lid of the pan upside down on another pan close by. After you've seared a piece of meat on both sides, place it on the upturned lid. Afterwards, everything can go back in the pan.
- To quench the meat, hold the lid of the pan tilted away from you and allow the water to run off the lid into the pan.
- If it's difficult to tell when meat is cooked, you can make a list of the time required for each type of meat to cook on your stove.
- Oven bags are also very useful. For example, cut a chicken fillet into pieces or have the butcher do this. Put the chicken in an oven bag and add some seasonings. These may already be in the bag. Close the bag, shake or knead it with your fingers and then put the bag in the oven. Do be careful when cutting the bag open: first cut it open a little to let the steam out before going further.

Vegetable preparation tips

- Many vegetables are also available in ready-to-cook form. You can also buy potatoes that are already peeled. This is a little more expensive, but it saves a lot of time.
- Mushrooms can be sliced quickly using an egg slicer as long as the blades are sharp enough.
- Cucumbers and carrots can be easily peeled using a cheese slicer or a peeler.
- If you dip a potato in water every now and again while peeling it, you will be able to feel the places that still need peeling more easily.
- Removing potato eyes is a challenging task. You will be able to feel the dimples with the eyes better before peeling the potato. Therefore, if you're blind, you're better off first removing the eyes and then peeling the potatoes, although many eyes will also be removed during peeling. If you have a visual impairment, however, it's a good idea to peel first and then remove the eyes, as the colour contrast makes this easier.
- 'Superbinten' are easier to peel because of their size, and they often have few eyes.
- Peeling an onion can be difficult. If you take off the outer layer, you will also be able to get at the peel immediately.
- Cutting an onion is easiest if you first cut it through the middle crossways. Lay the half onion flat on the cutting board and use a sharp knife to chop it.
- Peeling garlic is easier if you crush the clove first.
- You can wash a leek by first cutting the white of the leek lengthways down the middle. Fan open the leek and hold it under running water to rinse it thoroughly. Afterwards, cut it into pieces.

- Eventually, you will be able to smell when vegetables are almost cooked. If they are vegetables without much odour, lift the lid of the pan to get a better scent of them.

Cooking aids

There are special kitchen aids available for blind and visually impaired people. These can be purchased from suppliers of disability aids. Other aids can be found in department stores or specialised household shops.

Aids from the disability aids supplier

- Marking paste: this is a paste which hardens, and can therefore be used for adding symbols to things such as stove knobs. An alternative is textile paint that gives some texture; this is available from hobby shops.
- Bumpons, plastic studs with self-adhesive backing, can be used to mark things. You can also get these from DIY shops.
- Adhesive film for labelling with braille.
- Braille or speaking kitchen timer.
- Speaking scales.
- Measuring spoons.
- Level detector.
- Braille labels, label readers or voice buttons.

Aids from the household shop

- Some scales can be easily adjusted by removing the plastic cover over the dial so that you can feel the position of the pointer. The divisions in the scale can be marked with tactile dots.
- A digital scale is often very useful for visually impaired people.
- Strainer lid to clamp onto the pan.
- Tongs: a tool that makes turning meat easy.
- Wooden spoons.
- Seasoning jars and salt jar with wide openings, so you can get a pinch of seasoning using thumb and forefinger.
- Gas igniter for the stove.
- Large trivet for use on the worktop.
- Good pans (note: strainer lid).
- Anti-spatter lid.
- Chopping board with spout/funnel.
- Chopping boards of different materials/colours.
- Large, highly visible pan trivets.
- Brightly coloured plastic spoons and other utensils such as a mixing bowl, peeling knife and can opener.
- Anti-slip serving tray.
- Measuring cup (with self-applied dots).
- Peeler(s) or cheese slicer.

- Good, sharp knives and scissors.
- Oven gloves (with fingers and silicone material).
- Apron with pockets.
- Kitchen timer(s).
- Milk watcher: a glass plate that you put in a pan of milk. When the milk boils, the plate will make a rattling noise.
- Extra strong kitchen paper.
- Stickers (coloured).
- Baking paper for the bottom of the oven.
- Electric rice cooker (when cooking rice, the right proportion is one cup of rice to 1½ cups of water. When the rice is ready, the cooker will switch over to the warming setting).

The air fryer

The air fryer is a useful kitchen appliance which uses hot air to cook food. Air fryers are often used to cook fries and snacks without oil. However, you can also bake bread rolls or cook chicken wings in them, as they are actually small convection ovens. The appliance is under development – visit www.airfryerweb.nl to find out more. There is also a table with cooking times on the site. Before purchasing, consider which brand is the easiest to operate: Philips has an air fryer with a twist knob. The advantages of this appliance are that it is easy to operate, you don't have to be afraid of fat splashes, and it's healthier than frying foods in fat. The device comes with a basket as standard; you can remove this. You will then be able to use a suitable grilling pan in it. To prepare a chicken fillet, for example, put the fillet in the basket and cook it for 12 minutes at 180°C. You don't need to turn the chicken. A crumbed chicken fillet can be cooked on the grilling pan, so that the crumbs remaining afterwards can easily be cleaned out of the pan. The air fryer can be effectively combined with cooking on the stove, particularly if it's difficult to cook with several pans at the same time. The basket and external pan are easy to clean.

Safety and hygiene in the kitchen

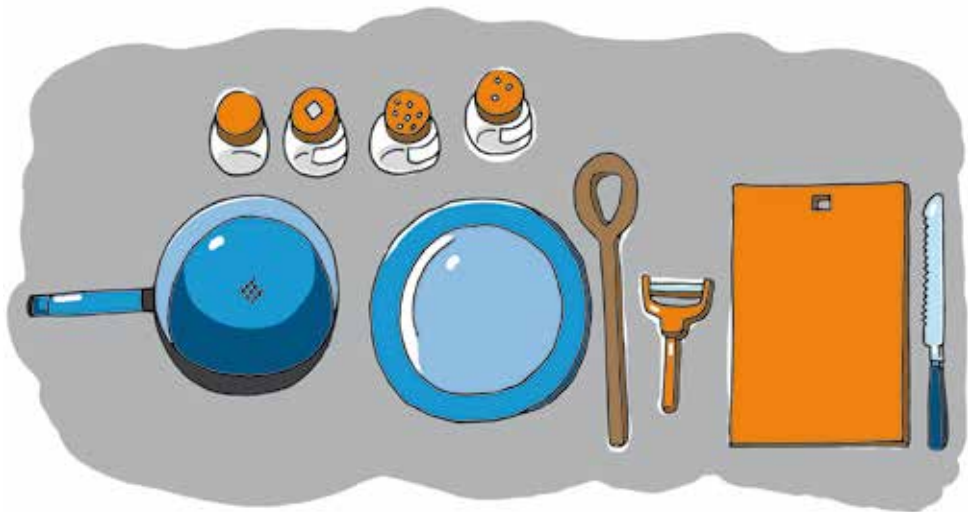
- Make sure that pan handles are turned to the side when you're cooking. If a handle is pointing towards you, you can easily bump into it and knock the pan to the floor. Also make sure that the handle is not sitting above an open flame.
- Be well aware of the location of electrical cords for appliances such as a mixer.
- Be careful with long hair and scarves near naked flames.
- Preferably use pans with handles that do not get hot.
- Preferably use oven gloves rather than pot-holders, as they protect your whole hand.
- Always put the things you're working with back against the wall, to prevent them being knocked over.
- Turn the gas on low before igniting it.

- Make sure that utensils that have been in contact with raw meat are not used for other things. Put them aside after use, preferably in the sink, or wash them immediately.
- Clean the worktop thoroughly after cooking or eating.

Reading and listening tips

- Cookbooks at the library service 'Passend Lezen'.
- The Allerhande magazine is available in braille and digital versions.
- You can hear recipes by using a smartphone and VoiceOver.
- Koken met gevoel (Cooking with feeling) by Judith Eurlings.
- Bakken met gevoel (Baking with feeling) by Judith Eurlings.
- Opruimen... en weer terugvinden (Tidying up... and finding things again) by Gerda Swellengrebel.
- Television cooking programmes such as 24Kitchen are very informative.
- There are also a lot of cooking videos on www.ah.nl. For children, there are fun recipes to try and instructional videos that demonstrate the basic skills.

9 Cooking in practice



The previous chapter contained general cooking tips. This chapter gives a few practical examples. As always, the best way of learning is to start simply and build up the level of difficulty. First help in the kitchen, and then try out a simple task for yourself. Once you've mastered that action, then you can add something more. The cooking activities described here are listed in order of difficulty.

Boiling something in water in a pan is relatively easy because you don't have to get close to the hot pan much during the cooking process. At most, you might have to stir it once or twice, and then drain it at the end. More actions are necessary when you're frying or braising, making this more difficult. Many sauces are ready to use and only need to be warmed up or reconstituted with boiling water. Everyone has their own preferences, so the following should be translated to suit your own eating habits.

On www.ah.nl/allerhandekids/ there are many short films about basic cooking skills and recipes for children. There are also cooking videos and instruction films for adults on www.allerhande.nl. The films about making easy dishes on www.24kitchen.nl are also very helpful.

Cooking in a pan

Cooking pasta

(sauce is in another section, see below)

Required:

- large pan of water, filled to within two or three fingers' width of the edge
- one teaspoon of salt
- kitchen timer
- one cup of pasta per person
- colander
- wooden spoon

Method:

- Put the salt in the water.
- Bring the water to the boil.
- Once the water is bubbling, carefully add the pasta to the pan. Do this by resting the cup on the edge of the pan.
- Stir through and wait till the water bubbles again, then turn the flame down lower.
- If using an electric stove, turn the heat down earlier.
- Don't put a lid on the pan, to avoid it boiling over.
- Set the timer (usually 8-10 minutes).
- Put the colander in the sink.
- Stir every now and again.
- Switch off the gas when the timer sounds. Pour the pasta into the colander.
- Put the pasta back in the pan or add the sauce if this is already made.

You can also put the pasta in cold water or water that is not yet boiling, if you find it difficult to put it in boiling water. If you do this, let the pasta cook a minute longer.

Cooking rice

Required:

- pan with three cups of water per person
- cup of rapid cooking rice per person
- one teaspoon of salt
- kitchen timer
- fork
- wooden spoon

Method:

- Put the rice, water and salt in the pan.
- Bring the water to the boil.
- Stir everything through once with a wooden spoon.
- Once it's bubbling, turn the flame down as low as possible.
- Keep the lid on the pan.
- Set the timer (generally for 10 minutes).
- Once the timer goes, switch off the flame and let the pan stand for 5-10 minutes in order to steam dry.
- Before serving, stir the rice through with a fork.

An electric rice cooker is simple to use.

Cooking peeled potatoes

Required:

- pan of water
- two peeled potatoes per person, cut into pieces.
- one teaspoon of salt
- kitchen timer
- colander
- fork with long stem, e.g. a meat fork

Method:

- Put the potatoes and salt in the pan and add enough water so that the potatoes are just under the surface.
- Bring the water to the boil.
- When the water bubbles, turn the heat down. You must still be able to hear it bubbling.
- Set the kitchen timer to 15 minutes.
- Put the colander ready in the sink.
- When the timer sounds, prick the potatoes with the fork to check whether they are ready; pricking them once or twice is enough.
- Switch off the heat and let the potatoes drain in the colander.
- Put the potatoes back in the pan.
- Put the pan back on the warm burner.
- Shake the potatoes up a little.

Cooking ready-to-cook (washed and chopped) vegetables

Required:

- pan with a little water
- one teaspoon of salt
- ± 250 g ready-to-cook vegetables, for example beans, leek, carrots, broccoli, cauliflower, endive or spinach
- kitchen timer
- colander
- a knob of butter if desired

Method:

- Put the vegetables in the pan with the water and salt.
- Bring the water to the boil, but don't put the lid on the pan yet.
- When the water is bubbling, put the lid on the pan and turn the heat lower. You should hear the water bubbling gently.
- Set the timer to the desired time, depending on the type of vegetable.
- Put the colander in the sink.
- Don't let the vegetables cook too long - you will be able to smell when they are done.
- Once the vegetables are done, drain the water off with the lid on the pan, or drain everything in the colander. Then return the vegetables to the pan.
- Stir a knob of butter through the vegetables, if you like.

Cooking leafy vegetables, such as spinach, is a little more difficult. Leafy vegetables are put on to cook with salt and only the water that remains on the leaves after rinsing. First turn on the heat under the pan. Put half of the leaves in the pan. These will shrink with heating, and the rest can then be added. Stir the first half and the second half together thoroughly. Heat a little longer until done. A good alternative is frozen spinach.

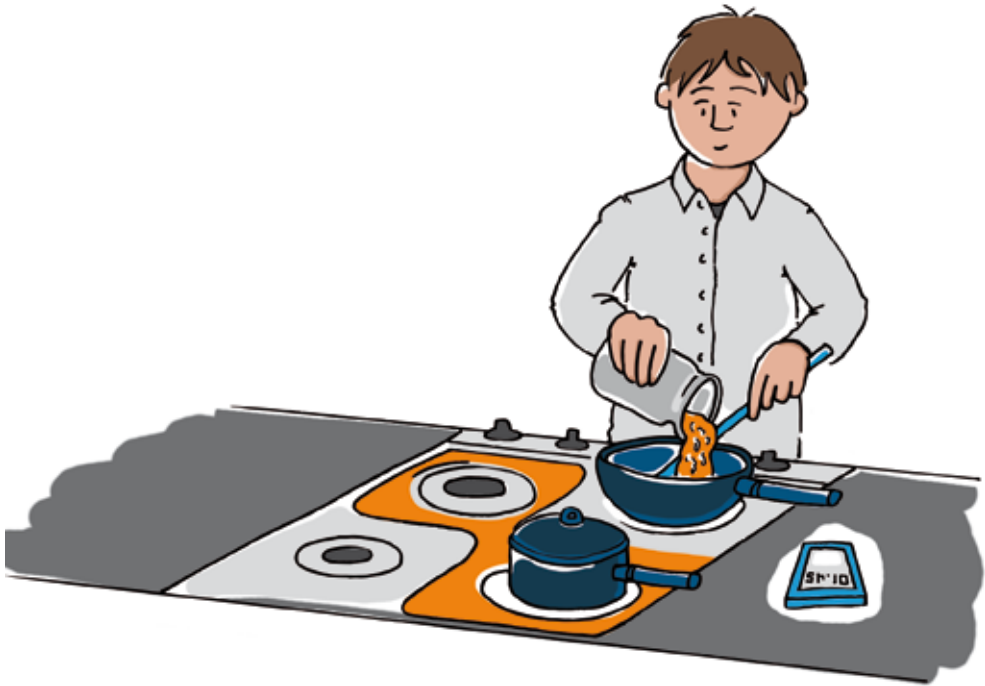
Vegetable cooking times depend on preference: some people like their vegetables almost raw, while others like them well cooked.

Preparing packet mashed potatoes

You can save a lot of time by making mashed potato from a packet. It's simple, but not everyone will like it. You can make all kinds of different meals simply by using different vegetables and adding fried bacon or minced meat.

When preparing the puree, it's most important to stir it well to get it fluffy.

Measuring the amount of milk or water required can be done using a measuring cup, or an empty cream carton if you know how much it held.



Preparing sauces

A wide variety of sauces come in a form that is easy to make. There are ready-to-use sauces in bags and pots that you only need to warm up. There are also packets of dried ingredients that just need to be mixed with water and heated. Once again, measure the correct amount of water using a measuring cup, and remember to stir the sauce well.

Heating smoked sausage

Smoked sausage is an ideal dish for beginner cooks.

Required:

- suitable pan of water
- one smoked sausage
- kitchen timer
- scissors, if the sausage is vacuum packed.
- colander

Method:

- Bring the water to the boil.
- Remove the sausage from the plastic packaging.
- Switch off the heat once the water is boiling.
- Carefully lower the sausage into the hot water.
- Set the timer for 20 minutes.
- Remove the sausage from the pan or put it in a colander to drain.

Frying in a frying or braising pan

Just as with everything else, when cooking food in a frying pan you learn best by going from simple to difficult, or from few actions to more actions. A fried egg or an omelette doesn't need to be turned over, and when cooking bacon pieces, you only need to stir them every now and again. Frying mince requires more dexterity and also the courage to work near a hot and spattering pan. Frying a piece of meat is the most difficult because the meat has to go in the pan when it's already hot. Turning the meat can also be challenging.

Frying an omelette

Required:

- frying pan
- bowl (not plastic)
- one egg
- fork to whisk the egg
- knob of butter
- pinch of salt and pepper
- spatula or pancake knife

Method:

- Break the egg into a bowl, whisk it and sprinkle a little salt and pepper on it.
- Put a knob of butter into the frying pan and melt it on medium heat.
- When the butter begins to sizzle gently, tilt the pan to distribute the melted butter over the bottom of the pan.
- Carefully add the egg to the pan. Rest the bowl on the edge of the pan, so you can make sure you don't pour the egg outside of the pan.
- Have the heat on neither too high nor too low. You should hear the egg simmering gently.
- After about five minutes, the egg should be solid and ready to take out of the pan. Tilt the pan above a plate and slide the egg onto the plate with a wooden spatula.

Frying bacon

Required:

- frying pan (don't use a fork or any other metal utensil if the pan has a non-stick surface)
- wooden spatula
- lean bacon cubes
- scissors, if the bacon is vacuum packed.

Method:

- Cut the packaging open with the scissors and distribute the bacon blocks over the bottom of the pan.
- Turn the stove on at a low to medium heat and allow the pan to become hot.
- Occasionally stir the bacon loose from the bottom of the pan using a wooden spatula.
- After around 15 minutes, the bacon cubes will be fried and crispy.

Bacon cubes are also easy to cook in a microwave oven. Put a layer of kitchen paper on a plate. Lay the bacon cubes on top and cover them with another layer of kitchen paper. Put the plate in the microwave. Cook the bacon for a minute and a half at full power, and they're done.

Frying minced meat or loose shawarma meat

Required:

- braising pan (these usually don't have a non-stick surface, so a metal fork can be used)
- fork and perhaps a wooden spatula
- mince (seasoned if desired)
- kitchen timer

Method:

- Mash the meat or the (seasoned) mince loose with a fork in a cold braising pan, so that it's already somewhat distributed over the bottom of the pan. Butter or oil is not necessary.
- Put the pan on a medium heat.
- Stir the mince loose from the bottom of the pan with a fork or spatula whenever you smell the mince and hear sizzling.

When cooking mince, you will need to stir it for longer and more often to make sure that all of the meat becomes browned. Depending on the amount, the mince should be loose and cooked after about 10 minutes. Raw mince makes a louder sizzling noise when you mash it in the hot pan. It sounds different when it's done. Smell and listen to determine whether it's going well.

Frying and turning meat

If you have to put something into a pan that's already hot, you can use a wooden spoon to feel your way, allowing the piece of meat to slip into the pan along the stem of the spoon.

Start with a flat, firm piece of meat so that turning it is easy. This sort of meat is also easier to feel with the tongs. A round meatball or a chicken leg is much more difficult to feel and grasp. Use a wooden spoon for orientation in the pan.

Frying meat is not easy because it has to be done on a high heat to get a good result. A high heat also means a greater chance of spattering, which can startle

you. A good precaution against spatters is an oven glove or thin cotton cooking gloves, together with a cooking apron.

If several pieces of meat are to be fried, it's easier to do this one by one. Always remove the browned meat from the pan and put it on a plate. Then cook the next piece, and so on, and then add all of the pieces to the pan at the end for a moment. This helps to keep things manageable.

Frying a hamburger or other thin, flat piece of meat

Required:

- frying pan
- knob of butter of about 25 g, half of a finger-thick slice.
- tongs
- plate
- hamburger, already seasoned
- a little water in a jug or egg cup

Put everything ready next to the stove. Lay the tongs ready on a plate with the hamburger already between its arms. Ensure that the handle of the frying pan is turned to the side so that it can't be knocked, but make sure that it's not above another burner.

Method:

- Put the knob of butter in the frying pan and melt it at a high heat
- When the butter begins to sizzle gently, tilt the pan to distribute the melted butter over the bottom of the pan.
- Once the sizzling has diminished, add the hamburger to the pan.
- Slide the hamburger carefully back and forth every now and again.
- Keep the heat high and turn the hamburger over after a minute, using the tongs.
- Once again, slide the hamburger carefully back and forth every now and again.
- After a minute, turn the heat down a bit.
- You can smell when the butter gets too hot. If the butter continues to sizzle loudly when the flame is already on low, add a little extra butter to the pan.
- Set the kitchen timer to 8 minutes.
- After 8 minutes (or less, depending on the thickness), the hamburger is done.
- Pour a little water into the pan and stir to make a little gravy.

Frying a chicken fillet

You can season the chicken fillet beforehand if you're not going to include it in some other kind of dish. Seasoning is not always necessary if you're going to add the chicken to a ready-made sauce later. You can also ask the butcher to season the meat or cut it into pieces or slices for you. For further instructions, see the section on cooking a hamburger.

Frying fish sticks

Fish sticks are crumbed and very soft, so they break easily. Cooking these will probably only work once you've had some experience in turning fried food. Turning fish sticks is best done using a spoon and fork rather than a pair of tongs. Consider doing a 'dry run' beforehand with a cold pan and frozen fish sticks. For further instructions, see the section on cooking a hamburger.

Braising meat in a braising pan

The difference between frying in a frying pan and braising in a braising pan is that the braising pan is deeper, making it more difficult to turn the meat. An advantage is that things can't fall out of the pan or be pushed over the edge so easily. Braising meat first involves searing it, and then putting the lid on the pan. This means you will be less troubled by the loud sizzling and hot spatters. It also means that your meal will take a little longer to be ready, as it's a rather slower method of cooking than frying in a frying pan.

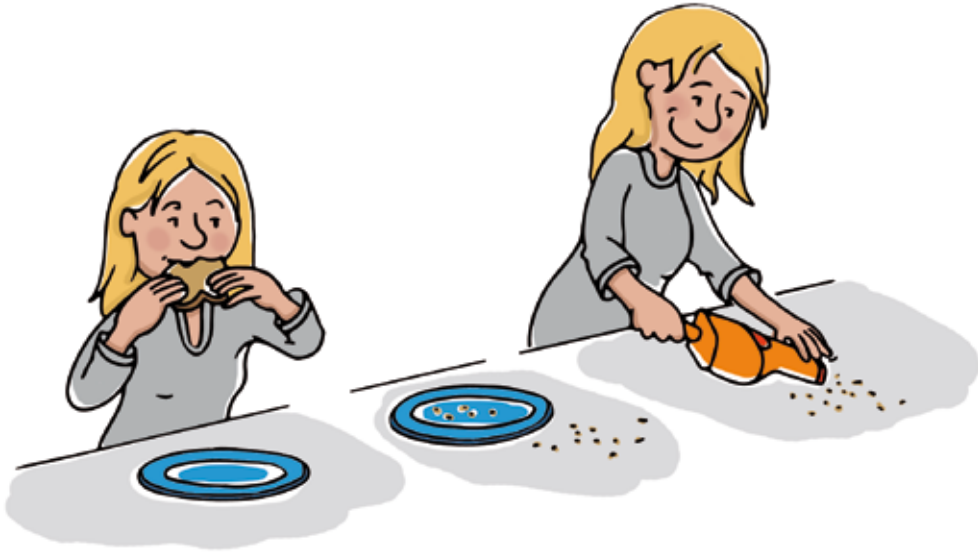
Braising a slavink or sausage

The difficult thing about a slavink is that it can roll over, and you won't be able to tell whether it's brown all over. One trick is to press it a little flatter before frying it. This is not so easy with a sausage, which you will have to push back and forth and turn frequently. This requires dexterity.

Braising meatballs

The same applies to braising meatballs as for the slavink; if the balls are round, you won't be able to tell whether they are evenly cooked all over. By flattening the balls, you will be able to keep better track of this.

10 Cleaning



How can someone who is severely visually impaired or blind clean effectively? What will he need to be able to do that independently? What is difficult and what helps? Someone who can't see well or at all can't see whether something is dirty, but can feel and smell it. All of your senses need to be engaged, you will need more time and patience, and working in a structured way will be important. Consider carefully which skills are useful for you to learn, and what you can better ask someone else to do. Doing things for yourself also means recognising your own limits.



Making a start

Learning how to clean doesn't come naturally to blind or visually impaired people. You can involve a blind or visually impaired child from an early age in simple tasks such as sweeping up crumbs or cleaning up spilled drink. Encourage a child to fetch a cloth himself to wipe up a spilled drink. In doing so, consider the following:

- Where can a child find a cloth?
- How will he know whether all the drink has been cleaned up?
- Can he rinse and wring out the cloth and put it back where it belongs by himself?

Tidying your room

How independent would you like your child to be? Which choices are to be made? Once your child is ready for it, he can start by tidying and cleaning his own bedroom. Choose from the following tasks, starting with one and then expanding to include more.

- Putting dirty clothes in the washing basket.
- Tidying up clothes.
- Putting shoes away.
- Taking empty cups to the kitchen.
- Emptying a full rubbish bin.
- Wiping a desk or table.
- Wiping the windowsill.

Teach a child how to open and close windows so that he can open his own window to air his bedroom out.

Working systematically is important with cleaning. Teach a child to sweep from right to left and from top to bottom. This will help him not to miss any spots. Teach him also to use his 'looking hand' and 'doing hand': he can use his looking hand to feel where something is or what's dirty, and then his doing hand to clean up.

Making warm, soapy water

There are two ways of dispensing cleaning liquid: by pouring it into the lid and using your index finger to feel whether the lid is full, or by squirting a little liquid directly into your hand. Add warm water afterwards. Make sure that the bucket or tub isn't too full.

Practice wringing out a cloth and folding it or hanging it over a tap. A scrunched up damp cloth will soon begin to stink.

Tips for adolescents

Living independently

If you're going to live independently, discuss the cleaning of your living environment with someone else. You can make a plan together for how things should be done, which tasks you might want or need to have someone else do, and how often that needs to happen. Check with the municipality whether you are eligible for support under the WMO (Wet Maatschappelijke Ondersteuning; Social Support Act).

Making a start

- Regularly air out your home (especially the bathroom and bedroom).
- Tidy up before doing the cleaning.
- Work systematically; this will save time and reduce the risk of missing anything. As far as possible, work from top to bottom, and from less dirty to more dirty tasks.
- Dust objects with a damp cloth.
- Drying afterwards with a tea towel will prevent streaks and missed spots.
- You can use a variety of cloths, differentiated by colour or materials (textures). Damp disposable cleaning wipes can also be useful.
- With a handheld vacuum cleaner, you can feel with one hand and vacuum with the other. You can't do this with a pan and brush.
- There are different cleaning products available; limit your use to a couple and make sure that they come in bottles that feel different. Where will you keep your cleaning products? What cloths will you use? Seek advice from others if necessary.
- It's worth having a sighted person go through your living environment from time to time, to point out things you may have missed.
- Planning to mop the floor yourself? The advantage of using a loose mopping cloth and getting down on your hands and knees is that you can better feel what you're doing.
- Remember that surfaces that are touched frequently, such as door knobs, door posts and banisters, will get dirty.

Kitchen hygiene

- Hygiene is particularly important in the kitchen. A dirty kitchen can lead to food spoilage and can attract all kinds of pests. To prevent this from happening, you should clean the stove and worktop immediately after cooking.
- You can clean the stove easily by laying a wet dishcloth on it for a time. Wring the dishcloth out afterwards, and wipe up the loosened dirt. Dry afterwards with a dry tea towel.
- Remember that splatters can also make the wall behind the stove dirty. Around and behind the tap there are places that should also be cleaned, and the worktop will need wiping down too.
- If you have a pan with burnt-on food, put cold water into it and allow it to soak.

Toilet and bathroom

- The toilet is usually a small space and therefore easy to keep clean. It's a good idea to have someone explain the layout and operation of the toilet.
- This is also a good idea for the cleaning of the shower, as not every shower is the same. After showering, remove hair from the drain. Hair can also accumulate in the drain of the bathroom basin.
- All of the loose items on the bathroom sink and shelf can be conveniently stored together in a little tub. Clean surfaces with a wet rag and dry afterwards with a tea towel, to prevent streaks.

Vacuuming

- Ask for a good explanation of the vacuum cleaner and its fittings. How do you replace the vacuum bag, what is the vacuum cleaner's brand and model number, and where can you buy suitable replacement bags?
- Divide the room into sections and vacuum the room section by section. Spots that are commonly forgotten include the skirting boards, including the top edge and the junction between skirting board and floor, around table legs, and corners.
- Edges and corners are places where dirt accumulates, so make sure to vacuum them regularly using the vacuum cleaner pipe.
- Some people find it easier to vacuum while sitting, using just the brush attached to the hose and no pipe in between.

Troublesome or time-consuming tasks for which you can ask for help

- Removing cobwebs.
- Changing rubbish bags.
- Cleaning next to and behind the oven and refrigerator.
- Checking whether there are any spoiled items in the refrigerator.
- Cleaning the refrigerator and defrosting the freezer.
- Descaling the coffee machine.
- Cleaning the edges of things like the hot plate under the pan grid.
- Checking whether dust and dirt is accumulating in corners or other places that are not so easy to reach with the vacuum cleaner.
- Indicating when the windows need cleaning.
- Window cleaning.
- Cleaning the oven or microwave.
- Descaling the shower head.
- Washing the shower curtain.

Accidents

- When an accident occurs such as a cup toppling over, you can mop up much of the fluid using kitchen paper. It's always useful to have a kitchen roll nearby.
- Broken glass can be picked up with damp kitchen paper, as the shards remain stuck to it. You'll therefore be less likely to cut yourself. The whole lot can go straight into the rubbish bin. If necessary, you can use a tea towel or oven gloves to pick up larger shards. Finally, it's advisable to vacuum thoroughly.
- Spilt fluid or dropped vegetables can first be wiped up with kitchen paper, after which you can clean the floor with a mop.

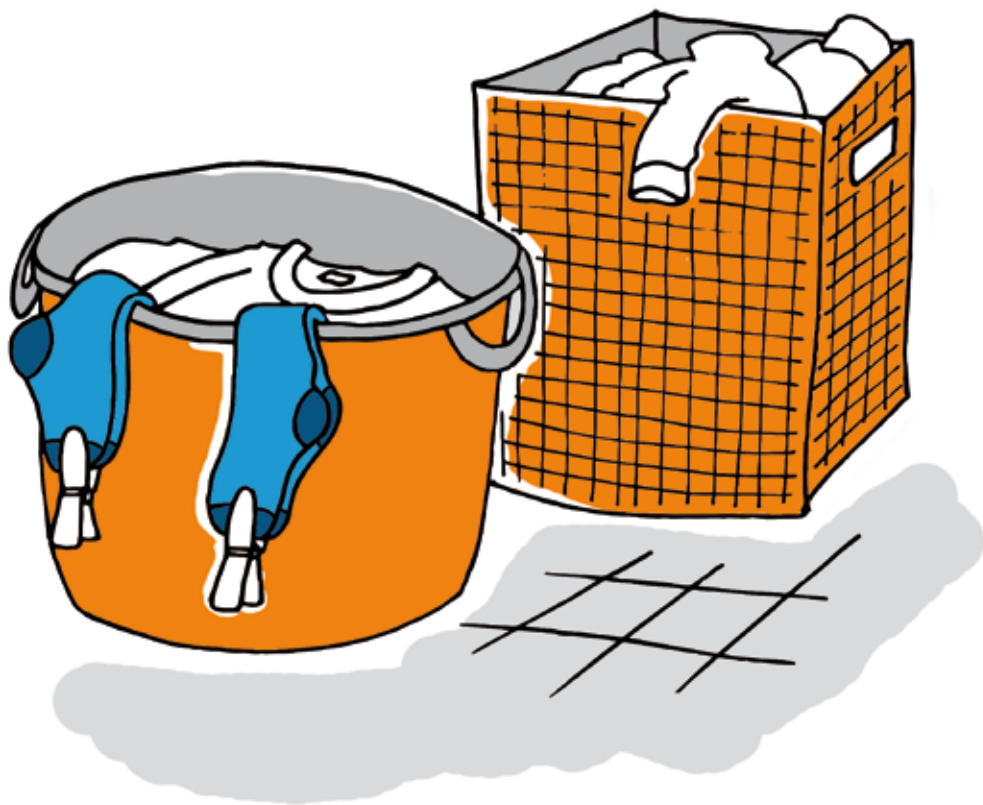
Burning and overcooking food

- Burnt potatoes? Put them immediately in another pan and add water to the burnt pan. If the pan can't be cleaned in the usual way, then it can be boiled with a layer of water and a teaspoon of soda. The next day it will be easier to clean. You can't use soda in aluminium pans because soda damages aluminium.
- Overcooked pasta can become burnt in on the hot plate. You can prevent this by cleaning the hot plate immediately. Turn off the burner, wrap a cloth around the washing up brush and use this to remove the dirt. This will prevent you from burning your hands. Clean the dishcloth and repeat this until the stove is clean.

Practice suggestions

- Encourage young children to scrub the tiles in the bath or while under the shower.
- Practice by washing up plastic cups.
- Unloading the dishwasher is a nice practice exercise.
- Scatter some uncooked rice on the ground. Encourage the child to vacuum this up; the rice rattles against the tube. Use your hand to check whether the rice is gone. This gives insight into what vacuuming is and that there are often things left around the edges.

11 Doing the washing



How can someone who is severely visually impaired or blind do the washing? What will he need to be able to do that independently? What is difficult and what helps? Someone who can't see well or at all can't easily see whether something is dirty, but can smell it. It's sometimes also possible to feel a stain. Information such as laundry instructions on an item of clothing is not accessible. All of your senses need to be engaged, you will need more time and patience, and working in a structured way will be important. Consider carefully what you can do for yourself, and what you should ask someone to help you with. Doing things for yourself also means recognising your own limits.

Before purchasing

Before buying clothing, ask how it needs to be washed. Washing labels in clothing are often so small that they are difficult or impossible to read. It's a good idea to consider easily washable or wrinkle-free clothing, such as shirts that don't need ironing.

Airing

Clothes that have little or no contact with your skin, such as jackets, thick jumpers and cardigans don't always need to be washed. You can freshen them up effectively by hanging them outside for a while or on a hanger next to an open window.

Sorting laundry

Type of laundry	Examples
White laundry	white sheets, tea towels, underwear
Light coloured laundry	coloured bed linen, light t-shirts
Dark coloured laundry	denim and dark socks
Delicate laundry	blouses, shirts, synthetic materials
Hand washable laundry	wool and silk

Sorting laundry can be difficult. It saves time if you have separate baskets for each type, for example for white, light coloured and dark coloured laundry. Throw the laundry directly into the right basket once it's dirty.

- Loose socks are difficult to find again. You can keep socks together using a sock clip (Sockstar).
- Use washing bags to sort things; these come in different sizes and can be found at Action and other places.
- Empty the pockets in a garment before putting it in the laundry basket. Coloured bits of paper that end up in the wash can cause discolouration or stains. Paper tissues that go through the wash disintegrate into countless tiny pieces.
- Wet washing that stays too long in the basket will start to stink, so hang it up to dry immediately.
- The disability aids shop sells special colour indicating buttons. These buttons come in different shapes and can be used to recognise different colours, for example. You can also use new technologies to recognise colours, such as apps like Aipoly Vision for the iPhone and iPad. A colour detector is also available from the disability aids shop.

Washing machine

- When purchasing a washing machine, make sure that it does not have ungraduated controls without an audible click. Touch screens are very difficult or impossible for blind or visually impaired people to operate. For washing machines that are easy to operate, visit a site like www.kimbols.be
- If you can't easily read the control panel of the washing machine, this can be adjusted to suit your needs. You can use adhesive film, Leukoplast tape or marking paste, for example. Investigate the latest options available in terms of new technology.

- Have someone clearly explain how the washing machine works: where is the lint collector, how and how often should it be cleaned, and into which compartment should you put the laundry detergent? Don't forget the emptying of the condensate tank in a condenser dryer.

Laundry detergent

- How do you tell the various laundry detergents and fabric softener apart? A simple solution is to buy different brands that have different shaped bottles, for example, a bottle with a handle and one without.
- You can measure the amount of detergent using the lid of the bottle and your finger. You can also mark the bottle.
- Put washing powder in a large container so that you can scoop it out without spilling it.
- The advantage of detergent pods is that you don't have to worry about getting the dose right.

Drier

- Have someone explain how to operate the dryer and what kind of maintenance is necessary.
- Remember to clean the lint filter.

Hanging up the washing

- If you shake out the garments well and hang them neatly, they will dry with fewer creases. This saves on ironing.
- You can hang up sheets in the following way: Lay the sheet in a large washing basket and place the basket under the washing line. Find the upper edge of the sheet. Shake the sheet out while the bottom part of it remains in the basket. Fold the upper edge with the corners together. Hang the sheet over the washing line and pull it through until it's hanging far enough over the line. Once the sheet is dry, it can be folded from this position too.
- Hang shirts together, towels together, and so on. This saves time in putting the clean washing away.

Ironing

- Ironing is a challenging task. The iron must be hot enough, but you run the risk of burning your fingers. The best advice is to avoid having to iron at all. Fibre blends are therefore practical, being a combination of cotton and viscose, for example. Fibre blends crease less and therefore require less ironing.
- Don't use too fast a spin cycle for shirts and blouses. Hang them wet on a hanger to dry; this saves a lot of ironing.
- You can smooth out t-shirts with your hand on a soft surface.
- There will be information about ironing on the garment's care instructions label. Have someone tell you what the label says, or read the label yourself with the help of an app.

- The various heat settings on the iron can be marked using heat-resistant marking paste.
- If you learn to iron, start out by ironing tea towels on a cool setting. First use your hand to smooth out the section to be ironed. If you can't see folds, then iron in one direction. For blouses or shirts that will only be worn under a jersey, the ironing can be limited to only those parts that will be visible, namely the collar and cuffs.
- Safety: make sure that the electrical cord hangs freely, so that the iron can't be placed on top of the cord. You can also use an iron cord holder to hold the electrical cord up and out of the way.

Folding up and putting away washing

- Lay out your cupboard in such a way that the most important items are at eye or touch level. Piles that are too high and too small will topple easily.
- Blouses and shirts are better hung up on a hanger. Close the top two buttons so that the garment hangs nicely.
- Store socks in pairs in a basket or drawer. You can fold socks as follows: Put one hand in a sock, all the way to the heel, then grasp the other sock with the same hand, pull the first sock over the second sock, and you'll end up with a ball. Keep them together in a basket. Another good idea is to fasten two socks together using a sock clip.

Stains

- You won't always notice stains on your clothing. Ask people close to you to point these out. They may not feel comfortable about doing this on their own initiative.
- Sometimes you can recognise stains by wetness or if a section of fabric feels stiff.
- When cooking or carrying out other tasks, wear an apron to prevent your clothes getting stained.
- Ask someone how to use stain removers (ox gall soap, stain remover spray etc.) if you want to do this for yourself.
- For many stains, the same advice applies: soak it in water to dissolve the stain.
- Find out whether there's a drycleaner nearby.

More information

Organisations

www.bartimeus.nl

www.visio.org

www.oogvereniging.nl

Ooglijn (Eye Line) tel. +31 30 294 5444

Disability aid suppliers

www.worldwidevision.nl

www.slechtziend.nl

www.irishuys.nl

www.optelec.nl

www.lowvisionshop.nl

Adapted Reading

www.dedicon.nl

Books

Koken met gevoel (Cooking with feeling) by Judith Eurlings.

Bakken met gevoel (Baking with feeling) by Judith Eurlings.

Opruimen... en weer terugvinden (Tidying up... and finding things again) by Gerda Swellengrebel, Bartiméus publication.

Other

For payment tools, visit www.rabobank.nl/bedrijven/toegankelijkheid/moeite-met-lezen-en-zien

Miscellaneous information:

www.kimbols.be

