It has been said that “the kitchen is the heart of the home.” It is where food is prepared and meals are shared; where conversations are held and dialogues are exchanged; and where memories are made and feelings of nostalgia are invoked. For many people, the kitchen truly is the heart of the home—the room that pulsates with the beat of daily life and provides sustenance to all those who live there.

But if you are blind or have low vision, a kitchen that is not outfitted with the assistive technology (AT) you need may be a daunting place for you. Entering a room filled with unidentifiable cans and jars, unfamiliar gadgets, and sharp and potentially dangerous tools could be an unnerving experience for anyone.

But there is an extensive array of AT products that have been created and customized to accommodate your needs and help make the kitchen more accessible to you. From talking appliances to adapted knives and other helpful gadgets, this guide will provide you with an overview of some of the AT products that are designed to help you make the kitchen the heart of your home.
Set Up Your Kitchen

If you are blind or have low vision, there are many AT solutions that may help you set up your kitchen so you can cook more independently. Tactile markings, such as Bump-Dots, raised dots with adhesive backing, may be a good option. They are a simple way for you to label and identify items in your kitchen. They come in various shapes (e.g., round, square, etc.) and sizes (e.g., small, large, etc.) to allow you to differentiate one product/setting from another. For example, you can adhere one raised dot to the bake control and two raised dots on the broil control of your oven so you can differentiate between the two controls.

Identifying ingredients in your pantry shelf may be a problematic task—especially if all of the containers are similar in size and shape. A voice-output labeling system – which consists of a labeler and a set of labels – may help make the task more manageable for you. The Reizen Talking Label Wand, which comes with 232 of its own adhesive and washable labels, is one example. To use this AT, all you have to do is hold the tip of the wand against one of its labels and record the name of the product through the wand’s built-in microphone. The label can then be affixed to the container. From then on, every time you touch the label with the wand, the talking label identifier will replay your recorded message back to you. Here is a quick rundown of how to use it:

The Reizen Talking Label Wand includes a removable 2-gigabyte (GB) memory card that offers up to 120 hours of recording. It also features an adjustable volume control, a 3.5-millimeter (mm) headphone jack, and two language options—English or Spanish.
**Prep Work: Measure and Weigh**

Cooking a delicious meal usually means following the recipe, and following the recipe means using the right amounts of ingredients. Here are a few audible tools that may help you take the guesswork out of measuring and weighing.

**Measuring Spoons**
Measuring spoons like the Braille Measuring Spoons (Classic) are available on the market to assist you. It is a four-piece set of measuring spoons that contains ¼-teaspoon (tsp), ½-tsp, 1-tsp, and 1-tablespoon (tbsp) spoons. Each spoon has its measurement clearly marked in raised print and Braille on the handle. Just run your finger over the Braille to make sure that you grabbed the right spoon, use it to scoop up the necessary ingredient, level it off, and pour the ingredient into your dish. Each spoon is tapered at the end, which may make pouring the ingredient out easier for you, too. Made of thick, durable, dishwasher-safe plastic, this four-piece set weighs approximately 2.8 ounces (oz) and comes on a storage ring so you do not have to run the risk of losing one.

**Measuring Cups**
If you need measuring cups, a product like the Speaks Volumz Talking 3-Cup Measuring Cup may be helpful. It is a battery-operated measuring cup that speaks the volume and weight of your ingredients aloud in a clear female voice. Place the measuring cup on top of the talking base, slowly pour the wet or dry ingredient into the cup (pausing every now and then for the voice readout), and add or remove as needed until you have reached the desired amount. Speaks Volumz can provide measurements in cups, ounces (oz), milliliters (ml), and grams (g). It can also take into account differing densities between liquids and solids by converting the ingredient’s measurement/weight. All you have to do is specify what you are measuring: water, oil, milk, or flour/sugar.

On the Speaks Volumz base, there are four vertically aligned raised buttons where you can program in your settings. Starting from the bottom and moving up, the button functions are as follows:

- **“T”** turns the unit on or off. To turn Speaks Volumz on, hold down the “T” button until you are greeted with a “hello.” When it is ready to start measuring/weighing, the announcer will say, “Scale ready.” When you are done, hold down the same button until you hear the announcer say, “Goodbye.” The “T” button also serves as the tare function (but more on that later).
- **“D”** programs the density of the ingredient being measured/weighed. Press the “D” button one time for water, two times for oil, three times for milk, and four times for flour or sugar.
- **“W”** allows you to specify whether you want the weight of the ingredient measured in ounces or grams (can measure up to 24 oz or 720 g).
- **“V”** allows you to specify whether you want the volume of the ingredient measured in cups or milliliters (can measure up to 3 cups or 690 ml). Pressing “W” or “V” again will also prompt the announcer to repeat the voice readout.
Speaks Volumz has also devised a way that may help you save time in the kitchen. When activated, its tare function will let you measure and add layers of dry or wet ingredients to the measuring cup. In other words, it will allow you to skip the task of emptying out your cup and washing it out after each time you pour in a new ingredient. While the unit is “on,” press the “T” button to activate the tare function when you are ready to add another ingredient on top of the existing one in the cup. This will reset the previous measurement to zero, giving you the chance to add another ingredient to the measuring cup for additional measuring/weighing. The clear cup, which is dishwasher- and microwave-safe, has a removable lid and an easy-pour spout. Together with the base, Speaks Volumz measures 6.5 x 4.8 x 6.0 inches and weighs 12.6 oz.

**Cut, Chop, Slice, and Peel**

Regardless of whether you are a seasoned chef or a rookie cook, you probably have experienced the sharp sting and slicing pain of a knife blade at one time or another. The following kitchen shears, knife, cutting board, and peelers were designed with your safety in mind. Get ready to cut, chop, slice, and peel with these or similar aids.

**Knife**

Knives like the [Cutting Board with Pivot Knife](#) may help you chop and/or slice fruits, vegetables, and other ingredients with extra safety and precision. It has a stainless steel blade and an ergonomically designed handle for easier grasping. The tip of the blade is attached to the cutting board with a pivoting hinge, allowing you to move the knife at a 90-degree arc. This connecting hinge is designed to give you greater control over your knife while cutting and to prevent you from accidentally misplacing it or forgetting where you left it on the off chance you momentarily get distracted while cooking. The attached 11.8-inch square cutting board is made of durable, sanitary polyboard with four suction cups on the bottom to help secure it to the countertop and prevent it from sliding while you are using it. The cutting board can be separated from the knife. Both the cutting board and the knife are dishwasher-safe.

**Protective Gloves**

Products like the [Cut Resistant Glove](#) may provide you with extra safety when using sharp kitchen utensils. It is a wearable aid that serves as a protective shield for your hand against sharp knife blades and peelers. Its stainless steel core is designed to protect your hand from cuts, nicks, and scrapes; its high-tech polyester and vinyl outer covering keeps the glove flexible and maneuverable when worn. Available in three different sizes, it is washable and can be worn on either the right or left hand.

**Cutting Board**

The [Chop2Pot™](#) or similar folding cutting boards may help you better transfer chopped ingredients directly from the cutting board to the pot. Lay the Chop2Pot™ flat on your countertop and use the durable cutting surface to chop up fruits, vegetables, meat, and
herbs (its nonslip feet are designed prevent it from skidding away from you as you chop). Then when you are ready to transfer your ingredients into the pot or pan, hold the board above the pot and squeeze the soft-grip handles on either side of the cutting board toward the middle. The polypropylene hinges will fold into a chute at the center of the board, allowing all of the chopped ingredients to fall directly into the pot/pan. It is dishwasher-safe and comes in three different sizes ranging from 12.5 x 6.7 inches to 18.9 x 10.6 inches.

**Chopper**

For chopping, the Chef’N VeggiChop or a similar product may be helpful. It is a hand-powered food chopper that can chop a wide variety of ingredients, including fruits, vegetables, boneless meats, herbs, and nuts. Place your ingredients inside the 3-cup container bowl, twist and lock the lid in place, and pull the cord to spin the chopping blades. Because the VeggiChop is powered by your strength alone and not by electricity, you have more control over how big or small your ingredients are chopped. So if you need smaller chunks of tomatoes for your salsa or more finely chopped nuts to top off your ice cream, just give the cord a few more pulls. The more times you pull, the more your ingredients will be chopped. And if you are not ready to use your chopped ingredients just yet, close the container with the included storage lid and pop it into the refrigerator—it will be ready when you are. The blades, container bowl, and storage lid are all dishwasher-safe.

**Shears**

The OXO Chopped Salad Scissors are a dual-functioning device that simplifies the entire salad-making process. To use, place all of your salad ingredients in a bowl. Then, use the scissors manually – just like standard scissors – to cut and chop up all of the ingredients directly inside the bowl. The micro-serrated, stainless steel scissor blades will effectively cut through most salad vegetables. The blades have rounded tips so they will not scratch or damage the surface of the bowl. They are also nearly three inches wide when they are closed, allowing you to toss and mix your salad ingredients together as you chop. The handle, which has a soft, nonslip grip, also features an integrated locking tab that keeps the blades safely closed when not in use.

**Fruit and Vegetable Peeler**

There are also peelers on the market designed to help you safely peel fruits or vegetables without nicking your fingers. For example, the Chef’N PalmPeeler™ is a contoured peeler that fits in the palm of your hand, giving you greater control of the device as you peel. Made of soft rubber, the PalmPeeler’s 4.75 x 4.25-inch pad consists of three main parts: (1) a finger loop on one side to hold the PalmPeeler™ securely in place, (2) an 18/10 stainless steel blade on the other side, and (3) a potato eyer on top for picking out any bruised spots on your fruits or vegetables. To use, slide your finger through the finger loop until the PalmPeeler™ is tucked against your palm. Then press the stainless steel blade against the fruit or vegetable you want to peel and drag it along
the surface of the fruit/vegetable as you rotate it. The PalmPeeler™ will peel the skin of the fruit/vegetable as you turn the food item around and around. And if you feel a bruised spot on your fruit/vegetable while you are peeling, use the attached potato eyer to remove it.

**Garlic Peeler**
Garlic can add a depth of flavor to almost any dish, but peeling each small clove can be a troublesome—if not vexing—task. Garlic peelers like the [Scroll Garlic Peeler](#) take the fuss and muss out of peeling garlic. Measuring 4.6 x 1.4 x 1.6 inches, it can be rolled and unrolled for convenient use – much like that of a real scroll. To use, lay the item flat on your countertop and roll it up until it is in the shape of a hollow cylinder. Then insert whole cloves of garlic into the center of the garlic peeler. Now place the device down on top of your counter, and roll the Scroll™ back and forth with the palm of your hand until the sound of crackling stops. The silicone surface inside it will strip the garlic skin away from the cloves as you roll it. Then unroll the garlic peeler and throw away the peelings. What you are left with are peeled garlic cloves that are ready to be chopped, crushed, or minced.

**Now You’re Cooking!**
Now that all of your ingredients have been measured, weighed, and cut, it’s time to put your culinary skills into practice. Here are a few other cooking aids that may help you cook your meal to perfection.

**Appliances**
Talking appliances like the [Magic Chef Talking Microwave Oven](#) provide you with verbal cues while you are cooking. Each button on the Magic Chef Talking Microwave Oven’s keypad is encircled by a raised ring so you can distinguish one button from the next. And if you need a reminder, just press the button lightly and the microwave’s announcer will identify the button for you in a clear male voice. Once you have placed your food inside the microwave (which measures 1.10 cubic feet), press the required buttons to specify the cooking time (from 1 second up to 99 minutes) and select from four power-level settings: high, medium, low, and defrost. It also allows you to program a timer within your cooking time to remind you to stir or reposition your food if your dish calls for it. This timer, which permits you to stop the microwave oven every so often throughout the cooking time, is adjustable up to 59 minutes and 59 seconds. Moreover, this microwave oven features 1,000 watts of maximum cooking power, a built-in kitchen timer (for other cooking tasks) that is adjustable from 1 second up to 24 hours and 59
minutes, a removable glass turntable, an adjustable volume control for the announcer, and a built-in AM/PM clock. With talking appliances like the Magic Chef Talking Microwave Oven, you no longer have to second-guess your keyed-in entries and just hope for the best.

Spatulas/Tongs
Flipping food in a frying pan may be a tricky maneuver—especially if you are uncertain whether the flipped item made it entirely into the pan. The last thing you want is for the food you are preparing to land on the stovetop or the floor. There are many adapted tools on the market that can help you flip food with precision, accuracy, and a dash of finesse. One example is the self-flipping EZ Flip Spatula. You lift the food up from the pan with this spatula and squeeze its handle. The head of the spatula will rotate automatically and flip the food item for you right into the pan. Since this gadget is self-rotating, you do not have to twist your forearm and hope that the flipped food item made it safely back into the pan. All you have to do is lift and squeeze. The EZ Flip Spatula is made of heavy duty metal and is dishwasher-safe. Another example is the Grip-EZ Spatula/Grabber Tongs. The spatula tongs allows you to simultaneously grip, lift, and flip your food. Use the flat spatula to lift the food item off the frying pan and press the hinged handle down to bring the pronged tips of the tongs together. This will help secure the food within the tongs’ clasp, allowing you to flip the food without the risk of dropping it or missing your target—the frying pan. And the icing on the cake? Tools like these may allow you to flip your hot dogs, patties, French toast, and grilled sandwiches with greater ease.

Cooking Thermometers
Overcooking or undercooking meat can be a disappointing outcome when cooking. Talking cooking thermometers like the Grill Right Wireless Talking BBQ/Oven Thermometer (Model AW131) may help you roast a chicken or grill a filet mignon just the way you like it and without the guesswork. This battery-operated device is comprised of two main parts: (1) a main unit that measures 5.6 x 2.75 x 1.53 inches and features a digital LCD screen, and (2) a wireless remote unit that consists of a stainless steel probe attached to a remote meat thermometer. First, insert the probe into the center of the meat (the probe will remain there throughout the entire cooking process). Then use the icons located on the main unit’s LCD screen to specify the meat type (i.e., beef, lamb, veal, hamburger, pork, turkey, chicken, or fish) and how well you want the meat cooked (i.e., rare, medium rare, medium, or well done). The main unit will announce your options and selections out loud and transmit the information to the remote unit’s sensor. Now you are ready to start cooking. The Grill Right Thermometer will keep you apprised of the meat’s cooking progress by announcing the current and target temperatures, how much time is left on the timer, when the meat is nearing the target temperature (two beeps followed by “it’s nearly done”), and when the meat has reached the target temperature (four beeps followed by “it’s done”). When it is time,
take the meat out of the oven/grill, remove the probe using an oven mitt, serve, and eat.

**Boiling Water Control**
If you are boiling eggs, vegetables, or macaroni and cheese from a box, it may be difficult to tell when your meal boils over if you are blind or have low vision. Products like the Ceramic Pot Minder may be helpful in avoiding this situation. It is a ceramic disc designed to prevent pots from boiling over when cooking on the stove. As soon as the water begins to boil, it starts emitting a low rattle at the bottom of the pot, letting you know that the water has begun to boil. Then, it modifies the size and number of bubbles rising to the top, preventing those messy and potentially dangerous boil-overs. Made of fully vitrified porcelain ceramic that is food-safe and nonporous, it does not affect the flavor or aroma of your food.

**Timers**
Talking timers may also be helpful in the kitchen to make sure you cook your meals just right. The Pocket Talking Timer and Clock, a two-in-one timer and clock, is one example. It keeps you informed of your cooking progress with alarm sounds and voice prompts. The countdown timer announces in a clear female voice the time you have remaining until zero. At the 20-minute mark, for example, you will hear a beep followed by the announcement, “20 minutes left.” Depending on the time you set, it will alert you with a beep and a voice prompt at the following intervals: every hour from 23 hours, every 10 minutes from 60 minutes, every minute from 10 minutes, every 10 seconds from one minute, and every second down to zero from 10 seconds. At zero, the timer alarm will sound for 60 seconds and the count-up timer will start (in the same increments as specified above) until you turn it off. For example, if one minute has passed after reaching zero, you will hear the announcement, “one minute over.” Measuring 0.63 x 2.63 x 2.63 inches and weighing 1.6 oz, this battery-operated timer/clock has a built-in stand so you can prop it up on top of your counter or table. It also allows you to select an alarm sound from six different options—whistling teapot, cuckoo, bell, hopping coil, car horn, or traditional beep. With talking timers and clocks, you will always know what the remaining cooking time is—down to the last second.

**For More Information**

Contact us at AbleData for more information on the products mentioned in this guide and others that may help you with cooking.

**References**


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