

# An Occupational Therapist's Job Is to Help You

Written by Mary Kershey, Occupational Therapist at O'Neill Healthcare Middleburg Heights



*Mary Kershey is an Occupational Therapist at O'Neill Healthcare Middleburg Heights. She's earned two bachelor's degrees, one in Family Relations and Child Development from Indiana University of Pennsylvania and the second degree in Occupational Therapy from Mount Aloysius College in Cresson. Mary has worked in OT for 19+ years and enjoys working with the geriatric population.*

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Everyone knows the adage “**work smarter, not harder.**” In simple terms, that's part of your Occupational Therapist's role. But how do they help? And how can they make your life easier?

You can think of Occupational Therapy (OT) in three words: **restore, compensate, and adapt.** OT focuses on helping you regain your independence and function, so you can do everything important to you. Here, we are going to focus on the adaption portion of OT.

Think about someone who broke their hip. The surgeon repairs their hip then says they can't bend forward at their waist. So, how do they pick up a sock off the floor or reach their feet to put socks on? An OT will show them how to use **adaptive equipment (AE)**. OT uses a reacher, sock aide, and long-handled shoehorn. The therapist will show them how to use these tools, which helps restore their previous abilities (putting on socks/shoes), and adapt to their environment (utilizing a wall for additional support to sit down on a chair). Today, we will focus on the types and uses of Adaptive Equipment or tools that help you work smarter.

There are all types of Adaptive Equipment. Ones that help put your socks on, wash your feet, drink from a cup easier, cut your food with one hand, get in/out of your tub without stepping over the side, get out of a chair, take your medicine on time, open a jar, read the small print, get up out of the car – the list goes on and on. If you have a problem, OT has a solution.

Let's explore several pieces of AE that may help you.



## Reacher

Have trouble picking up items off the floor? A reacher is your friend! There are two versions: a long tool with a finger-type trigger (like a squirt gun) or a whole hand trigger (like a spray bottle). When you squeeze the trigger, the two parts at the end “close” so you can “pinch” any item, like socks, keys, wallet, TV remote, etc. Reachers work best with light items.



## Sock Aide

If you have difficulty reaching your feet or lose your breath bending over, the sock aide might be for you. This tool is a piece of plastic with two strings on the sides. You simply put your sock over the plastic base, drop it to the floor and use the strings to slide the sock towards you and eventually onto your foot! This tool takes a few tries to master, but you’ll quickly become a pro.



## Car Door Handle

If you are having difficulty getting out of a car, this little device might work for you. Once your car door is open, you insert the Metro Car Handle to the knob or hook on the inside of your car frame. It provides you with additional leverage to rise from the seat. The Metro Car Handle also has a built-in flashlight.



## MedCenter Alarm Clock

If you take medication throughout the day, it can be easy to lose track if you already took a dose. Let a “pill reminder” help you. While there are many different types, this one allows you to set 4 different alarms to remind you throughout your day.



## Weighted Silverware

Hand tremors sometimes make it difficult to scoop or spear your food with a spoon and fork, which leads to the frustration of dropping your food into your lap. Try a weighted fork or spoon. They look like regular silverware, but they help you keep your food steady as you eat.



## Jar Opener

Arthritis can affect your grip, making it difficult to open a jar. The Brix JarKey Jar Opener in Red is a great jar opener of choice. You slip the plastic tab under the jar and lift it up, breaking the vacuum seal. Next, you just turn the lid.

*I use this one in my house & it's incredible how easy it is to use!*



## Extended Tub Bench

Trouble stepping into the tub? Try an extended tub bench. Think of it as a small bench that sits in the tub and extends over the tub ledge. Outside the tub, you just back up to sit down. Then turn and slide into the tub, lifting one leg at a time into the tub. Voila! You are in the tub. Now, you can sit or stand to shower. The extended tub bench may help decrease your risk of falling.

## Where to find AE?

Lots of places carry AE, like Medical supply companies, department stores like Target and Walmart, or pharmacies like Drug-Mart, CVS, and Walgreens. However, they tend to keep basics in stock, like shower chairs, reachers, medication boxes, long-handled shoehorns. For a more specialized item such as weighted silverware or an electronic pill reminder, look online.

## Where to find OT?

If you are unsure of AE you may benefit from or how to use it, request an evaluation and treatment session with your local O'Neill Healthcare Therapist! We'll recommend tools that best suit your needs and lifestyle. If you have a problem, Occupational Therapy can help find a solution. Together, we can solve any problem and make sure we work smarter and not harder.

## Where to find ONHC?

O'Neill Healthcare has six local facilities that specialize in rehabilitative therapy, offering both in-patient and outpatient services. Reach out to your local therapy department to schedule your occupational, physical or speech therapy evaluation.

We have a new location! We're excited to join the Middleburg Heights community. Located across from Southwest General Hospital we offer outpatient Occupational Therapy plus skilled nursing and more!

Therapy services can be covered by Medicare and other insurance plans.

**Make the "smart" choice and contact us today 440-808-5500**



O'NeillHC.com

## Exceptional Therapy = Outstanding Outcomes

A few testimonials from past O'Neill Healthcare rehabilitative therapy patients. Call 440-808-5500 to learn how we can assist you with your therapy needs.



“Today I credit my good health to the people who helped me at O'Neill Healthcare Bay Village. Each day, a happy faced caregiver gave me my medication, love, and kind words of encouragement. When working with physical or occupational therapy, I noticed safety was very important and it was practiced daily. I am grateful to everyone that helped me during my time at O'Neill Healthcare Bay Village.”  
– Hershel “Hank” Helderman



“Occupational therapy helped me back to normalcy. Not being able to eat, get dressed, go to the fridge by yourself is something I took for granted. OT helped with everything, including selfcare! If there was a task was too hard or dangerous, they taught me a modifications so I can get around my daily routine safely. I'm grateful for OT.”  
– MaryAnn Lewis



“My rehab stay at O'Neill Healthcare Lakewood has been such a positive experience. As soon as I got here I realized I was in good hands. All of the staff were very friendly to me. If I need therapy again, I want to come back here!”  
– Alesia T.

“Upon admission, I was unable to walk. With the dedicated and persistent therapy team, I had a remarkable turnaround. I am truly grateful for the compassionate care I received at O'Neill Healthcare Middleburg Heights.” – Audrey Parsons



“The therapy team at O'Neill Healthcare North Olmsted will forever be in my heart. I came to them broken and they fixed me! The dedication and persistence to healing their patients meant a great deal to me during my stay at O'Neill Healthcare North Olmsted.”  
– Ralph Kula



“I really love everyone here. It has been a great experience. I dressed myself this morning and I was able to walk to breakfast with my walker. I try to walk as much as possible now.” – Fran Webb

