



Planning for my future:

Step 1 to strengthen independence

Name.....

Date of birth.....



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Introduction

If you have received this booklet from your GP or other healthcare provider, you're an older person who wants to improve or maintain your current level of independence and remain living independently for many years to come. You may or may not feel you are aging well and you may or may not experience changes to your independence and quality of life from chronic health conditions (early or later onset), such as asthma, diabetes and dementia.

To continue living independently and enjoy activities into middle age and beyond, a focus on remaining healthy is key. Being as healthy as you can for as long as you can helps to promote a better quality of life and can help to prevent loss of independence. Where relevant, it is also important to manage, as well as possible, early or later onset health conditions to minimise their impact on independence and quality of life. In Australia, it is a national priority to promote adoption of a healthy lifestyle.

Physical and psychological changes from health condition and age related changes can affect our abilities and impact activities such as:

- Eating and drinking
- Shopping
- Cooking
- Housework
- Driving
- Physical activities e.g. gardening, sports

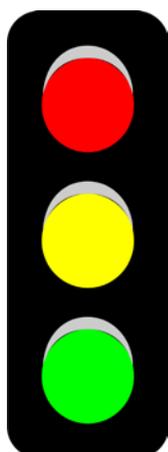
This booklet is the first in a *2-step process* designed to help you, your family, friends and others who are important in your life to identify changes in what you can do, and risks in your daily activities that may threaten your ability to live independently and well. It is important to discuss what you identify with your GP so that together you can introduce strategies that will reduce the risks that have a negative impact on your independence and the quality of your life.

How to complete Step 1 and use this booklet

To get started, please take a few moments to consider and answer the following questions:

What do I want to be different (i.e. about my way of living)?
What do I want to do for myself?
What am I happy for others to do for me?
What would a great day look like for me?

Then look at the list of activities covered by this book and think about your own concerns; for your own independence or for how you age well in the coming years. Start with the section that covers topics of most concern to you. Then look at the questions and rate yourself using the traffic light system:



RED (happens frequently / of greater concern)

I should **stop** and think about how risky this is for my independence/quality of life and do something about it now.

AMBER (sometimes happens)

I should think about how risky this is for my independence/quality of life and do something about it soon.

GREEN (never happens / of little or no concern)

I should keep doing what I'm doing and consider this activity again later.

The column to the right is for you to say why you think you might have the troubles you have identified and to say what you think might help your independence or quality of life. An example of how to complete sections of the booklet is shown on the next page.

Booklet Completion *Example*



8) Chores at home

The various tasks involved in home management include house-cleaning, laundry and small repairs and these jobs can be overwhelming. Effective home management can contribute to a better quality of life.

Please tick 'YES' or 'NO' in the boxes provided.

*If you answer 'NO', please move to the next section.

				YES	NO*
I complete my own house chores and maintenance				X	
<h2>Chores at home</h2>	How often does this happen? N = Never, S = Sometimes (1-3 times per fortnight) F = Frequently			1. Why do you think this happens? 2. What might help?	
	N	S	F	<i>Suggest reasons for this and ways to manage it.</i>	
Maintaining and cleaning my home is difficult		X		My house is too big to clean it all on my cleaning day	
I find it difficult to complete lighter tasks (e.g. dusting, dishes)			X	I can't reach the top shelves to dust anymore and I hate dusting. A longer handle on my duster would be good if I could find one.	
I am unable to do some tasks because they are too physically demanding		X		I used to mow my own lawn but I can't start the mower now. I wait until someone is around who can start it for me - it can be ages.	
I lack motivation to do chores at home			X	I'm just too tired to do the dishes at night - I leave them for in the morning.	

It is important to note that you do not have to complete this booklet all at once. Some of the sections may not be relevant to you or you may not be ready to start thinking or talking about some topics and how you live. As you complete a section there is a space to record the date – on the table of contents. You can choose to complete the booklet yourself or you may want to discuss any (or all) of the sections with your family, carer or support person and complete it with them.

All of the sections can be photocopied and filled out by your family, carer or support person if you choose.

How to complete step 2- Taking action for healthy aging.

What is most important is that you have a conversation with your GP about what you found when completing the booklet. You can talk about accessing resources or using strategies early to ensure you remain as independent for as long as possible. Some resources/strategies that help people to remain independent require a GP referral, others might not. Your GP can keep a copy of your self-assessment (i.e. this Step 1 booklet) in your records so that you can refer back to them and changes can be monitored over time.

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1) Sleeping

Getting a good night's sleep is important. Adequate sleep and healthy sleeping habits can improve your health, wellbeing and enjoyment of life.

Sleeping	How often does this happen?			1. Why do you think this happens? 2. What might help?
	N	S	F	
				<i>Suggest reasons for this and ways to manage it.</i>
I go to bed earlier or later than before				
My sleep pattern is disturbed (e.g. getting to sleep or back to sleep, getting up during the night)				
When I wake up I feel unsure about where I am				
I feel reluctant to get out of bed in the morning				
I nap during the day				
Other issues or problems or additional comments:				



2) Eating & Drinking

It is important to eat well – especially if you have a medical condition (such as diabetes), which benefits from healthy eating and drinking. Eating well can be harder when you live alone or have difficulty preparing / cooking food.

Eating & Drinking	How often does this happen?			1. Why do you think this happens? 2. What might help?
	N	S	F	
				<i>Suggest reasons for this and ways to manage it.</i>
My current diet is nutritious				
I forget to eat meals				
I have trouble using eating utensils				
I have difficulty bringing food to my mouth				
I gain or lose weight without trying				
I eat or drink less than I used to				
I eat or drink more than I used to				
I feel less hungry or interested in food				
I have trouble swallowing food or fluids				

Eating & Drinking	How often does this happen? N = Never, S = Sometimes (1-3 times per fortnight) F = Frequently			1. Why do you think this happens? 2. What might help?
	N	S	F	<i>Suggest reasons for this and ways to manage it.</i>
I have pain when I chew or swallow				
I can feel dizzy when I eat or drink less than usual				
My friends / family express concern about my eating and drinking				
Other issues or problems or additional comments:				



3) Physical & leisure activities

One of the most important things we can do to maintain our health and our independence is participation in physical and leisure activities.

Physical & Leisure Activity	How often does this happen?			1. Why do you think this happens? 2. What might help?
	N	S	F	
				<i>Suggest reasons for this and ways to manage it.</i>
I participate in physical activity				
I participate in leisure activities (e.g. reading, craft, gardening)				
I feel tired or short of breath when I do light exercise				
I feel unsteady on my feet				
Pain prevents me from being physically active				
Problems with my sight cause me to trip or fall				
I have difficulty judging distances				
I have tripped or fallen at home or in the community				

Physical & Leisure Activity	How often does this happen? N = Never, S = Sometimes (1-3 times per fortnight) F = Frequently			1. Why do you think this happens? 2. What might help?
	N	S	F	<i>Suggest reasons for this and ways to manage it.</i>
I avoid going out because I am scared of tripping or falling				
I have lost my balance or fallen using stairs				
I feel dizzy or lightheaded when getting up from a chair or out of bed				
I have lost balance or fallen getting in or out of a chair				
I have fallen out of bed				
When walking I steady myself by holding onto furniture or objects				
Other issues or problems or additional comments:				



4) Medications

Knowing what medications to take, when to have them and why they are important for your health can be quite difficult. Taking the right medications helps you to feel well and stay active.

Medications	How often does this happen?			1. Why do you think this happens? 2. What might help?
	N	S	F	
I take medications not prescribed by my doctor (e.g. multi-vitamins, herbs, fish oil)				<i>Suggest reasons for this and if necessary ways to manage this</i>
I have trouble reading medication labels/instructions				
I have trouble opening medication containers / packets				
I take medication to help me sleep, reduce pain or improve my mood				
I am taking five (5) or more medications				
I visit more than one (1) doctor for treatment				
I get my medications from more than one (1) chemist / pharmacy				

Medications	How often does this happen? N = Never, S = Sometimes (1-3 times per fortnight) F = Frequently			1. Why do you think this happens? 2. What might help?
	N	S	F	<i>Suggest reasons for this and if necessary ways to manage this</i>
I keep old or expired medication at home				
I forget to take my medication or forget I have already taken them				
I don't take some of my medication because of the side effects				
I drink alcohol				
I currently smoke				
I drink caffeine (tea, coffee, energy drinks)				
Other issues or problems or additional comments:				



5) Emotional Wellbeing

Contact with other people is very important for our emotional wellbeing and how happy and content we feel. Exclusion from social activities can affect how we feel and may lead to depression and anxiety.

Emotional Wellbeing	How often does this happen?			1. Why do you think this happens? 2. What might help?
	N	S	F	
				<i>Suggest reasons for this and ways to manage it.</i>
I have visits from family, friends or neighbours or I visit them				
I have telephone contact with family, friends or neighbours				
I take part in social activities (i.e. dancing, bingo, meet friends)				
I prefer to stay at home and do not like to leave the house				
I have become less interested in other people or the world around me				
I no longer enjoy activities that I once used to				
I feel left out or excluded				

Emotional Wellbeing	How often does this happen?			1. Why do you think this happens? 2. What might help?
	N	S	F	<i>Suggest reasons for this and ways to manage it.</i>
I avoid family gatherings				
My hearing / eye sight makes being with other people hard				
I am bothered by other people's behaviours				
I have less patience or am more irritable				
Feelings of love and care are expressed towards me				
Other issues or problems or additional comments:				



6) Driving and Mobility

For most of us, driving has been an important skill in our daily lives and is our link with family, friends and the wider community. However, as we age some health conditions create limitations and impact on our capacity to drive safely.

Please tick 'YES' or 'NO' in the boxes provided.

If you answer 'NO' to both questions, please move to the next section.

	YES	NO
I currently drive a motor vehicle		
I currently use a motorised scooter		

Driving & Mobility	How often does this happen? N = Never, S = Sometimes (1-3 times per fortnight) F = Frequently			1. Why do you think this happens? 2. What might help?
	N	S	F	<i>Suggest reasons for this and ways to manage it.</i>
I forget where I am going while driving familiar routes				
I have problems maintaining my attention and concentration while driving				
I have trouble using the indicators, wipers or radio				
I have trouble changing lanes, turning or merging into traffic				

Driving & Mobility	How often does this happen? N = Never, S = Sometimes (1-3 times per fortnight) F = Frequently			1. Why do you think this happens? 2. What might help?
	N	S	F	<i>Suggest reasons for this and ways to manage it.</i>
I have difficulty recognising and understanding road signs, traffic signals and roundabouts				
I have difficulty judging distance and space between objects/parking				
I take longer to react (e.g. slower to stop at traffic lights)				
I mix up using the brake and accelerator				
I have near misses or bump into objects (e.g. cars, trees, gates, poles, fences)				
I get frustrated and irritable when driving				
Other drivers beep or yell at me				
I forget where I have parked the car				

Driving & Mobility	How often does this happen?			1. Why do you think this happens? 2. What might help?
	N	S	F	<i>Suggest reasons for this and ways to manage it.</i>
I drive much slower than other drivers				
I have painful / stiff joints even after short trips				
My vision and/or hearing affects my driving				
I have difficulty driving at night				
Other issues or problems or additional comments:				



7) Public Transport

Public transport is a viable alternative to driving. It can be a safer and a more reliable option than driving oneself – and it is cheaper.

Please tick 'YES' or 'NO' in the boxes provided.

*If you answer 'NO', please move to the next section.

	YES	NO*
I currently use public transport		

Public Transport	How often does this happen? N = Never, S = Sometimes (1-3 times per fortnight) F = Frequently			1. Why do you think this happens? 2. What might help?
	N	S	F	<i>Suggest reasons for this and ways to manage it.</i>
I catch the wrong public transport				
I have problems getting on or off public transport				
I have trouble finding the correct stop				
I have had difficulty crossing streets safely				
I have trouble with transport cards/travel passes and time tables				
Other issues or problems or additional comments:				



8) Chores at home

The various tasks involved in managing at home include house-cleaning, laundry and small repairs and these jobs can be overwhelming. Managing well at home can contribute to a better quality of life.

Please tick 'YES' or 'NO' in the boxes provided.

*If you answer 'NO', please move to the next section.

	YES	NO*
I complete my own house chores and maintenance		

Chores at home	How often does this happen? N = Never, S = Sometimes (1-3 times per fortnight) F = Frequently			1. Why do you think this happens? 2. What might help?
	N	S	F	<i>Suggest reasons for this and ways to manage it.</i>
Maintaining and cleaning my home is difficult				
I find it difficult to complete lighter tasks (e.g. dusting, dishes)				
I am unable to do some tasks because they are too physically demanding				
I lack motivation to do chores at home				
I leave chores unfinished (e.g. left washing in the machine)				

Chores at home	How often does this happen?			1. Why do you think this happens? 2. What might help?
	N	S	F	<i>Suggest reasons for this and ways to manage it.</i>
I have not completed chores properly (e.g. forgotten to use washing powder)				
I have difficulties with changing light globes				
I have difficulties mowing the lawn				
I sometimes forget I have completed a chore and do it again				
Other issues or problems or additional comments:				



9) Grocery shopping

Grocery shopping is an essential skill that most people do without much thought. However, it can become quite challenging over time. These skills are important for your daily life and eating well.

Please tick 'YES' or 'NO' in the boxes provided.

*If you answer 'NO' to both questions, please move to the next section.

	YES	NO*
I do my own grocery shopping		
I go grocery shopping with someone		

Grocery shopping	How often does this happen? N = Never, S = Sometimes (1-3 times per fortnight) F = Frequently			1. Why do you think this happens? 2. What might help?
	N	S	F	<i>Suggest reasons for this and ways to manage it.</i>
I have difficulties using shopping trolleys & baskets				
I have difficulty finding items in my familiar store				
I find it difficult to reach items on low / high shelves				
I have difficulty recognising items / packets				
I avoid supermarkets with no seating or toilets				

Grocery shopping	How often does this happen?			1. Why do you think this happens? 2. What might help?
	N	S	F	<i>Suggest reasons for this and ways to manage it.</i>
I get tired and go home without buying all my shopping				
I have problems carrying my groceries				
I avoid shopping as I fear I will fall				
I do not feel confident when paying for my shopping				
I do not feel safe out in the community				
I cannot shop as often as I would like				
Buying culturally suitable foods is difficult				
Other issues or problems or additional comments:				



10) Cooking

Cooking and preparing food is important. After all, it is how we feed ourselves. However, cooking can also be more difficult as we get older – not only can it be exhausting, but it can also be hazardous.

Please tick 'YES' or 'NO' in the boxes provided.

If you answer 'YES' to either question, please fill out the relevant questions below.

	YES	NO
I currently cook for myself		
I make simple meals or hot drinks		

Cooking	How often does this happen? N = Never, S = Sometimes (1-3 times per fortnight) F = Frequently			1. Why do you think this happens? 2. What might help?
	N	S	F	<i>Suggest reasons for this and ways to manage it.</i>
I have burned myself on the stovetop or oven				
I have left the oven or hotplates on after using them				
I have spilt hot liquids from the kettle, pots or pans				
I have problems using kitchen appliances and utensils				
I find some food packages difficult to open				

Cooking	How often does this happen? N = Never, S = Sometimes (1-3 times per fortnight) F = Frequently			1. Why do you think this happens? 2. What might help?
	N	S	F	<i>Suggest reasons for this and ways to manage it.</i>
I have slipped or fallen trying to get food, pots and pans from cupboards				
I forget to return food to the fridge or freezer				
I have had nausea, vomiting, and/or diarrhoea after eating meals cooked or prepared at home				
I have difficulty following a recipe or preparation instructions				
I have forgotten how to cook some things				
Other issues or problems or additional comments:				



11) Bathing & Waterworks

Good hygiene is important to being healthy and comfortable. Not having bladder or bowel leakage helps us to keep doing the things we love: playing with your children or grandchildren, socialising with friends or exercising.

Bathing & Waterworks	How often does this happen?			1. Why do you think this happens? 2. What might help?
	N	S	F	
				<i>Suggest reasons for this and ways to manage it.</i>
I shower or bath less often than I would like / need to				
Setting the water temperature (too hot / too cold) is difficult				
I slip or fall into, or out of, the shower or bath				
I have difficulty removing or putting on clothes (e.g. inside out or underwear over clothing)				
I have difficulty using clothing fasteners (buttons, zips, laces)				
I have trouble getting onto and off the toilet				
I reduce my food or fluid intake to avoid going to the toilet				
I have difficulty locating the bathroom or toilet in time within familiar settings				

Bathing & Waterworks	How often does this happen? N = Never, S = Sometimes (1-3 times per fortnight) F = Frequently			1. Why do you think this happens? 2. What might help?
	N	S	F	<i>Suggest reasons for this and ways to manage it.</i>
I leak urine when I cough, laugh, sneeze or when lifting, pushing or pulling				
I have disturbed sleep as I need to go to the toilet or don't make it to the toilet				
I see my GP about urinary infections				
I have difficulty using continence devices or aids				
I have difficulty attending regular appointments (e.g. hairdresser, dentist)				
I have constipation / diarrhoea				
I avoid leaving the house because I feel embarrassed by my bowel or bladder problems				
Other issues or problems or additional comments:				

