Booklet 4

Assistive Technology for the Home

This booklet is the fourth of six sections in the Assistive Technology Toolkit, which was created in collaboration with the Department of Occupational Therapy at the University of Manitoba and Jewish Child & Family Service.

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Disclaimer

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Introduction

This section will talk about how assistive technology can be used to control areas in the home environment to make everyday activities easier.

Technology can control areas of the home like lights, temperature, and appliances. This can help people use their homes more efficiently and can make day-to-day tasks easier.

For example, meal preparation, cooking, cleaning, and getting ready for the day can become more difficult, as we age, and assistive technology can help make tasks more manageable.

Before purchasing, consider:

- Talking with your building manager or landlord before **installing** technology
- Set-up
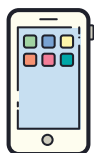- Technology **compatible** with home
- Researching products

We have organized the assistive technology by price and simplicity. With simple and cost-friendly options listed first.

Look for the symbols from the legend. They will appear at the top right side of the page for each device. This will help you prioritize the assistive technology.

Legend

Requires WIFI   Requires Smart Phone/Tablet/ Computer   Requires installation   Cost

Definitions

Away Mode: A feature activated when you are not at home, and continuously records while you are away.

Bluetooth: Allows devices to connect to one another.

Compatible/Compatibility: Works with devices you already own. Some companies are not compatible with others. For instance, Apple devices can only work with other Apple devices.

GPS: Stands for Global Positioning System. It pinpoints the location of items and provides directions for tracking and locating items.

Installation: Setting up or putting something in place. Consider the tools and skills needed to install and make home modifications.

Internet: A digital library accessible through devices for information, videos, news, shopping, and communication.

Motion detection: A feature in devices like cameras or lights that senses nearby movement.
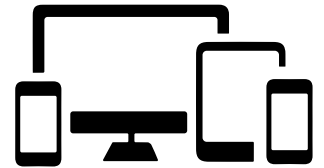
Definitions continued

Notifications: Alerts on your devices for messages, reminders, events, or emergencies, through sounds, vibrations, lights, or on-screen messages.

Remotely: Accessing and using technology from a distance.

Smartphone/Tablet/Computer: Devices for messaging, calling, gaming, document editing, and internet access, usable with Wi-Fi or cellular data.

Voice Assistance: A feature in devices that lets you use your voice to ask questions to the internet, set reminders, play music, control smart home devices using voice commands, and more.

Wi-Fi: Wireless internet for homes and apartments, set up by providers like Bell MTS, or Rogers together with Shaw.
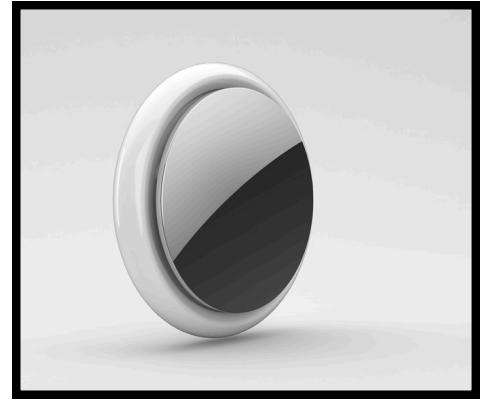
Useful Insight

Embracing smart technology means staying one step ahead of potential hazards. This allows you to focus on enjoying life to the fullest, knowing you are protected.
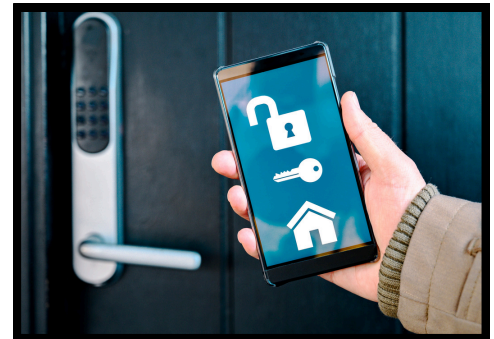
Assistive Technology for the Home Overview
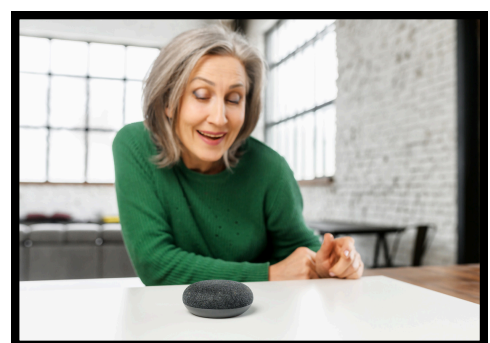

Plugs/Outlets

Trackers

Lights

Door Locks

Doorbell Camera
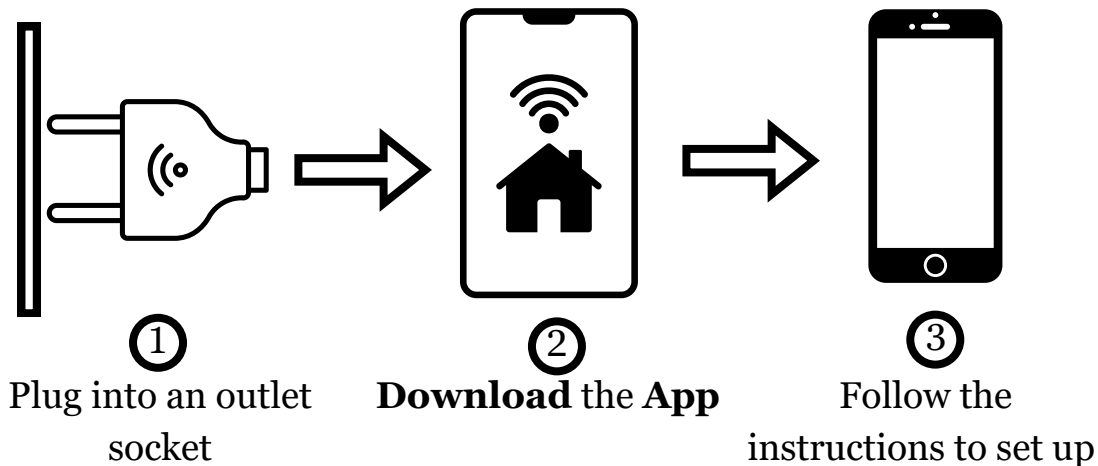

Thermostat

Appliances

Smart Home Assistance

Plugs/Outlets

Smart plugs are like regular outlets but can control the devices plugged into them. These outlets can control devices like lamps, radios, fans, coffee makers, and more. They make it easy for devices plugged into the outlet to turn on or off **remotely.**

Set-up

①	②	③
Plug into an outlet socket	**Download** the **App**	Follow the instructions to set up

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Useful Insight ☐ ☐ ✖

Did you know that a smart plug offers a simple and cost-effective way to transform your regular devices into smart ones? Control your fan or other appliances that are plugged in with ease, all while reducing energy consumption and saving you money

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Features:

- Controlled **remotely**: Controlled via **app** or **voice assistance.**

- **Compatibility**: Works with devices you already own.

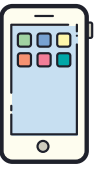- Set schedules: Power plugged-in devices at specific times of the day.

Is It For You?

- Control devices **remotely** while away from home, such as turning off a space heater to prevent fires. You can also use the away mode to prevent theft by giving the appearance of being home.

Cost: $10-$35 **$**

Trackers

A small electronic device that has **GPS** tracking, allowing you to track and locate valuable items, people and/or animals. Once a tracker is attached to an item, placed in an individual's bag or on an animal collar, you can track it through an app on your phone that uses **Bluetooth**.

How does it work?

1. Place the tracker in or attached to an item

2. **Download** the corresponding **app** to pair with the tracker
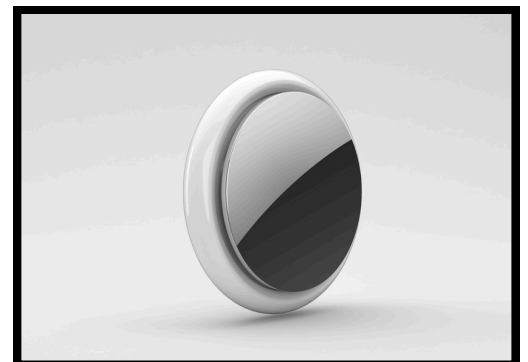
3. Use the apps map to guide you to the tracker

Is it for you?

- Find lost items with GPS tracking from far distances. Following the directions of a map provides a precise location. This increases the security of valuable items such as wallets, backpacks, luggage, keys, cars, jewellery, and animals.

- Place trackers in a pocket, bag, or purse to allow people to be tracked, increasing their safety while in the community.

- Set off an audio alarm that will guide you to the tracker allowing you to locate the item through sound.

Cost: $25-$40

Prices can range from depending on the brand.

Lights

Smart lights are convenient and energy-efficient lighting systems that offer various features, such as turning lights on and off **remotely**, dimming, changing colours, increasing contrast, and setting a timer for the lights to adjust on a schedule.

How does it work?

1. Install smart bulb into light fixture

2. **Download** the **app** & manage lights from where you are

Is it for you?

- Customize lighting brightness, dimness, colour temperature and ambiance to make navigation around your home easier and reduce the chance of falls.

- Turn light settings on and off automatically away from home.

- Bulbs last for a long time before needing a replacement.

- Use a schedule or **motion detection** to turn the lights on or off around your home for safety.

Ask Yourself

Do you ever worry about falling when getting up at night? Smart lights can help by lighting your path without you having to fumble with switches.
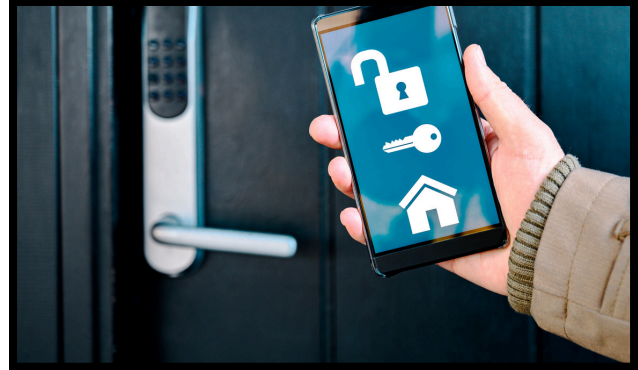
Cost: $15-$200 $ – $ $

Door Locks

Smart door locks are like regular ones, but they help secure your home by allowing you to **remotely** control the lock using an app.

How does it work?

1. **Install** the smart door lock

2. **Download** the **app** on your phone and manage access to your home

Features:

- Manage access into and out of your home remotely from anywhere and send temporary access codes to family or friends to allow entry.

- Does not require a physical key to lock or unlock the door.

- Receive **notifications** to know when someone has entered and exited your home.

Is it for you?

- Manage who has access to your home to increase security.

- Unlock the door for visitors or health care professionals without having to get up, reducing the risk of falls for individuals with mobility challenges.

- Lock your door **remotely** without returning home if you forgot to lock your door after stepping out.

Cost: $80-$400   **$ — $ $ $**

Prices vary depending on the brand and features.

Doorbell Camera

A smart doorbell camera combines a traditional push-button doorbell with a camera, allowing you to see who is at your door, even when you are not home.

How does it work?

1. **Install** doorbell camera

2. Camera is activated when it detects motion or the doorbell is pressed

3. Receive a **notification** and live feed of the person at the door.

4. See and speak to the person at the door.

Is it for you?

- See and talk to someone at your door at all hours of the day before opening it, which can increase security.

- Get **notifications** when a package has been dropped off or if a package has been stolen from your door.
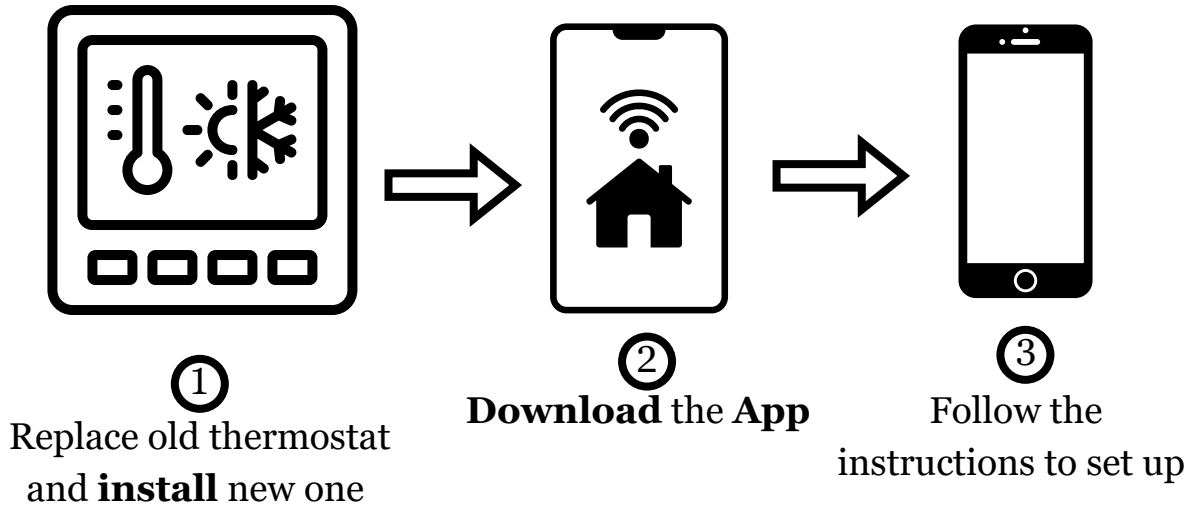
Cost: $50-$300 $ − $ $ $

Prices range depending on the brand and features.

Thermostat

A smart thermostat controls the temperature in your home. It can learn your habits and preferences and automatically adjust the temperature.

Set-up

①
Replace old thermostat and **install** new one

②
Download the **App**

③
Follow the instructions to set up

Ask Yourself

Are you aware of how much energy your home consumes? A smart thermostat can monitor energy usage and find ways to save you money!

Features:

- Speakers: Play music and receive audio alerts.

- **Voice assistants:** Ask questions such as what the weather is like or tell the Smart thermostat to lower the temperature.

- Alerts and **Notifications**: Receive alerts and **notifications** about your HVAC system maintenance or potential issues.

Is It For You?

- **Remotely** adjust the temperature while away and before arriving home so you can return with comfort.

- Customize bedroom temperature for better sleep quality.

Cost: $95-$250 $ $

Appliances

Smart appliances allow you to connect, control, and monitor your appliances through your **phone** or **tablet.** This makes everyday activities such as cooking, cleaning, and laundry activities easier.

How does it work?

1. Install like regular appliances

2. **Download** the **app** & connect via device or touch screen

Is it for you?

- Control and monitor appliances from where you are, making tasks more manageable.

- Interact with appliances using touchscreen and **voice assistance**.

- Increases independence in completing tasks more effectively.

Cost: $50-$1000+ $ — $ $ $

Prices range depending on the appliance and its associated features.

Examples include SMART...

- Automatic Vacuum (Roomba)
- Stove Tops & Ovens
- Washers & Dryers
- Faucets
- Toasters
- Refrigerators

Smart Home Assistance

A device that connects the smart technology in your home to one central hub. It uses **voice assistance** which means you can talk to the device and ask it questions. Examples are Google Home and Alexa.
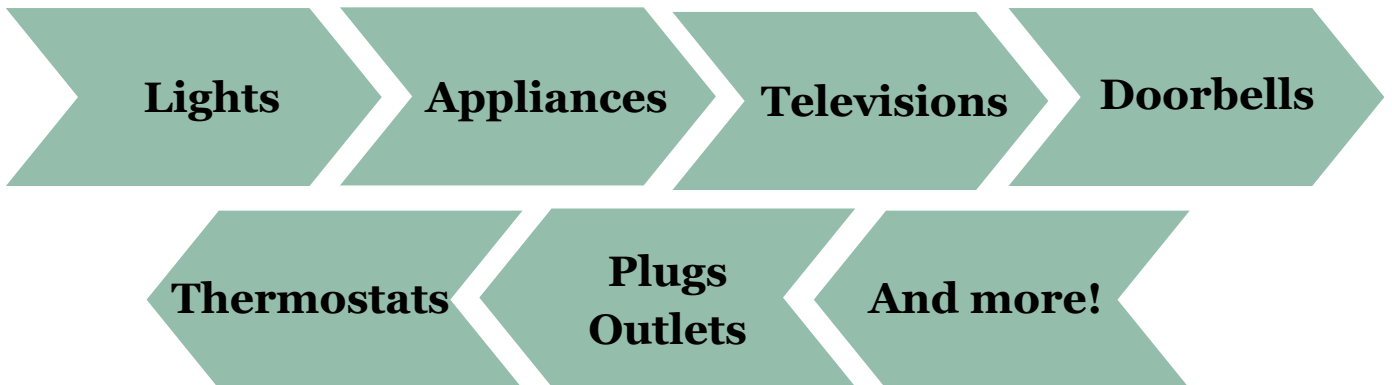
Set-up

(1) Plug in device

(2) **Download** the **app**

(3) Connect devices to your smart home assistance

Can control:

Lights → Appliances → Televisions → Doorbells

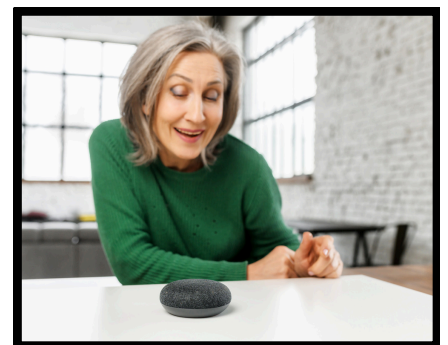Thermostats → Plugs Outlets → And more!

Is it for you?

- Control multiple technology from one device.
- Access the **internet** and control technology using your voice and asking questions aloud.

Cost: $50-$300 $ $

Prices range depending on brand and features.

Resources

This toolkit is a great first step in exploring assistive technology, which can make life easier and more enjoyable. By learning more about what products are available, you can boost your confidence and become more independent.

- **Best Buy:** Three store locations in Winnipeg offering a variety of smart home products and appliances. It offers installation, set-up, and support for Smart Home Services.
  - Phone: (866) 237-8289
  - Details: In-store shopping, curbside pickup & delivery

- **Ikea Winnipeg:** One Winnipeg locations offering a variety of smart home devices and home automation products to choose from.
  - Address: 500 Sterling Lyon Pkwy, Winnipeg, MB R3P 1E7
  - Phone: (866) 866-4532

- **Home Depot:** Five Winnipeg locations to choose from, offering a variety of smart home devices and home automation products to choose from.
  - Address: 727 Empress St, Winnipeg, MB R3G 3P5
  - Phone: (204) 779-0703

- **Rona Winnipeg:** Three Winnipeg locations to choose from offering a variety of smart home devices and home automation products to choose from.
  - Address: 1333 Sargent Ave, Winnipeg, MB R3E 3P8
  - Phone: (204) 774-7389