

Getting Around Town

Helpful ways to get from here to there when you're visually impaired

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*Empowering visually impaired
people to live fulfilling lives*

Staying Mobile Is One of the Key Secrets to Personal Freedom.

Being able to get around your home, neighborhood and community with ease is at the core of independent living. Low vision adds challenges, but by making some adjustments and learning new techniques, it's entirely possible to continue to navigate your environment with confidence.

The best way to hone your skills is through what is commonly referred to as "orientation and mobility training," taught by trained specialists. At Braille Institute, we offer free classes as well as individual at-home coaching to help those with low vision learn how to identify and avoid obstacles, safely cross streets and climb steps, use public transportation, walk with a guide, and more. We encourage you to contact us and take advantage of these services. In the meantime, here are a few quick tips to help keep you safely on the move:

- **Plan ahead.** Think through your route before you go. Make mental notes of any landmarks you will be passing and use these to keep you oriented along the way. Write down and carry the specific times and identifying numbers of buses, subways or other transportation you will be using, plus the exact address of your destination, to show to others if needed.
- **Dress for where the action will take you.** Wear comfortable and supportive shoes. Make sure you have sunglasses with at least 400 UV protection and wear a hat or visor to help minimize sun damage. Try to avoid going out after dark, when you are less visible. But if you do, wear light-colored clothes and carry a cane with a reflective surface.
- **Keep your cell phone at hand.** In addition to contact numbers of people you are visiting, you can also program it with the numbers of any paratransit services you may be using.
- **Get global support.** Global positioning systems (GPS) are now embedded in many cell phones and are also available as small devices that you can hand-carry. A GPS can be used to map out a route, give audio instructions, and pinpoint exactly where you are at any given time.

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Getting Around Town (continued)

- **Take your cane along.** Whether you choose to use it or not, it's a universally recognized signal that you have special vision requirements, which both increases your safety and makes it clear why you may be asking for assistance or directions.
- **Be a great communicator.** Asking questions and talking to others helps you stay oriented and provides vital information. For example, when using the bus, sit near the front and tell the driver where you want to get off so he or she knows to call it out. If you feel unsure crossing a street, ask someone near you if the "walk" signal is on or off. And if someone offers to guide you, let them know that the best method is for you to grasp their arm just above their elbow and walk side by side.

Feel free to get on the move again – you'll be glad you did! We can help you get started. We offer hundreds of free resources, classes and services. For more information, call us or visit us online.

Stay up to date on ways to help visually impaired people live fulfilling lives. Join our free online community at solutionsinsight.org.



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