



20 Questions to Ask Yourself Before Purchasing Adaptive Technology

The term “adaptive technology” is used to refer to devices and systems designed specifically for the benefit of people with disabilities. It falls under the umbrella of “assistive technology,” which can be anything that promotes greater independence by people with disabilities, regardless of whether it was initially designed for that purpose. For example, a magnifying glass could be used by a person with impaired vision, or a person with 20/20 vision trying to make out something extremely small.

Some types of assistive devices are simple and inexpensive (such as the aforementioned magnifying glass); therefore, finding the right one may not require much thought. However, others are major investments; this is particularly the case for certain forms of adaptive technology. If you’re considering purchasing a piece of adaptive equipment for yourself or a loved one, here are 20 questions worth considering to ensure you’re making the right choice:

Will the device in question help you/the user with the difficult aspects of daily life?

Is it the simplest solution that exists?

Can you rent it first to see how well it works?

Is it easy to transport from place to place?

Can it be used indoors and out?

Is it affected by weather?

Is it comfortable to use?

Will learning to use it be a challenge?

Does the device pose any safety risks?

Is it unnecessarily noisy or otherwise distracting?

If it can be connected to other forms of technology (for example a computer), is it compatible with your/the user’s existing devices?

How long is the battery life?

How long does this product usually last? If you’re purchasing wearable technology for a child, will it be quickly outgrown?

What is covered by the warranty/satisfaction guarantee?

How good are the seller/product reviews?

Have you spoken to any individuals with similar disabilities about their experiences with the



device?

Have you sought the advice of a physical therapist, occupational therapist, or doctor?

How will you pay for the device?

Have you considered whether this device could be paid for (at least in part) by

[Medicare/Medicaid](#), private health insurance, or the [Department of Veteran Affairs](#)?

Have you taken advantage of unbiased resources like [ABLEDATA](#) (run by the [US Department of Health and Human Services](#)) to learn more about the options you have available?

