
Universal Design for Better Living

Lesson 1: Universal Design—Better Tools for Everyday Tasks



Main Idea

There are many new products on market with universal design features that can make everyday tasks easier for everyone.

Objectives

Participants will be able to:

- Understand concept of *universal design*
- Recognize products with *universal design* features that make them more convenient & appealing for all users
- Identify ways they could use these products in their own homes
- Know where to purchase these products.

Prepared by Mary H. Yearns, Ph.D., Associate Professor and Extension Housing Specialist, Department of Human Development & Family Studies, Iowa State University, for Iowa Department of Elder Affairs.

No endorsement is intended of the products mentioned nor is criticism implied in similar companies or their products not mentioned.

Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Stanley R. Johnson, director, Cooperative Extension Service, Iowa State University of Science and Technology, Ames, Iowa.

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Materials See photos of each gadget in "Contents of Gadget Kits," UDBL.TG 4	18 pairs of items from the Universal Design Gadget Kits (2 suitcases)	
	(A) Duffel Bag = Yard and Shop	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Kneeling pads/benches
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Rain gauges
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Garden trowels
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Garden pruners
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Screwdrivers
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mousetraps
	(B) Soft-side Suitcase = Home	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Toilet tissue holders
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Kitchen timers
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Spatulas/scrapers
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Vegetable peelers
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Measuring cups
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Measuring spoons
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Pot holders
<input type="checkbox"/>	Dusters	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Scissors	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Calculators	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Staple-removers	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Ink pens	

Materials, cont.	Handouts for each participant Print master copies of handouts from Web site	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	"Universal Design: Better Tools for Everyday Tasks," UDBL 1
	<input type="checkbox"/>	"Where to Get Gadgets and Gizmos," UDBL 2
	<input type="checkbox"/>	"Meeting Evaluation Form," UDBL 3


For Instructor	
<input type="checkbox"/>	"Instructor Feedback Form," UDBL 4
<input type="checkbox"/>	Free catalogs and sample Web site pages for ordering gadgets
<input type="checkbox"/>	Pencils for each participant & containers to hold them
<input type="checkbox"/>	Blank tablet or sheets of paper to record name & address of participants
<input type="checkbox"/>	Box to hold evaluation forms at end of meeting
<input type="checkbox"/>	Optional: Write "door prize" on small sheet of note paper. Bring tape to hold it in place on underneath side of meeting room chair.

Background Reading	<p style="text-align: center;">Universal Design & Home Accessibility Web Site Iowa State University Extension www.extension.iastate.edu/universaldesign</p>
	<p>Under the section on Definitions read:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "The Concept of Universal Design." Be sure to note difference between <i>accessible design</i> & <i>universal design</i>. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Accessible design = products & buildings that are accessible & usable by people with disabilities. ○ Universal design = products & buildings that are accessible & usable by everyone, including people with disabilities. • "What is Universal Design?" <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Universal design = the design of products and environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design. • Browse other articles in this section as time permits.


Advance Preparation 1-2 Months	One - Two Months Before Meeting
	Select time, date & location for meeting
	Prepare & distribute publicity for meeting (sample publicity items available on Web site) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Items for newsletters, newspapers & radio • Flyers to distribute in community
	Read through Lesson 1
	Find pairs of items from Gadget Kits (listed above) & be sure each is working properly
	Read background information from ISU Extension Web site on Universal Design & Home Accessibility www.extension.iastate.edu/universaldesign
	Look at handout—“ Where to Get Gadgets and Gizmos ”—for information on purchasing gadgets. Order free catalogs & print out sample pages from Web sites.
	Check with local merchants to see if products are available locally. If not, encourage them to start carrying these items. (Give them copy of handout on “ Where to Get Gadgets and Gizmos. ”) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Option: Perhaps they would be willing to supply gadget to use as door prize at meeting. Promise to publicize their contribution at meeting.


Advance Preparation 2-4 Weeks	Two - Four Weeks Before Meeting
	Find pairs of products from Universal Design Gadget Kits (listed above) & practice using them.
	Think about which item in each pair you would prefer to use in your own home.
	Identify particular features of preferred product that make it more appealing or convenient for you to use.

	<p>Check batteries in TV remote control and wireless door bell.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Replace batteries as needed. • To extend battery life, take out when not being used; put back in for meeting; remove after meeting.
	<p>Print copies of handouts, assemble & staple, one for each participant. (Get master copies from Web site.)</p>
	<p>See if meeting location has enough tables & chairs, or bring/borrow extras.</p>

Preparation— meeting site	At the meeting site	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>For small group, arrange seating in circle. For larger group, arrange seating so chairs face table at front of room.</p>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>On table at front of room place:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pairs of products selected from gadget kits • Copies of handouts • Container with pencils • Copies of free catalogs & sample Web site pages for ordering gadgets and gizmos • Small cardboard box to hold completed evaluation forms at end of meeting • (Optional) Door prize that will be given away at end of meeting.
		<p>Optional: Write “door prize” on a blank file card and tape it underneath one of the chairs where participants will be seated.</p>

Introduction

 5 minutes

 Laughter is encouraged

Say something like this in your own words:

Today we are going to look at some of the products and tools that are used for everyday tasks around the home. I'm going to ask you to think about whether these everyday tools could be made better.

Hold up the traditional mousetrap and say something like this:

One of the most unpleasant jobs around a home is to set and reuse a mousetrap. Can we build a better mousetrap than this one?

Demonstrate how it takes two hands to precariously open and set the traditional mousetrap without having it snap shut on fingers—then say something like this:

How do you get rid of the dead mouse? Do you open the trap and toss out the mouse, or do you just throw away both the trap and the mouse?

Then hold up the mousetrap with universal design features and demonstrate how it works. (It can be opened & set with one hand; easy to click trap open to dispose of mouse; easy to reuse again without having to touch mouse or trap mechanism with fingers.)

Activity

 **5-10
minutes**

Compare Traditional Design & Universal Design

Now hand out pairs of products to audience. If there are few participants, give one pair to each person, then ask two people to work together to look at features.

If there are many participants, give out one pair of items to a small group of people who are sitting close together.

After everyone (individual or small group) has received a pair of items, say something like this:

Now I'd like you to closely examine the pair of items you received and decide which item of the pair you would rather use in your own home – and why. I'll give you a few minutes to decide. Be ready to discuss the particular features of each item that make it more convenient than the other one.

Give participants time to discuss – 5 or 10 minutes. Walk around the room to see when they are finished discussing & have made decision about which product they would rather use. When most individuals/groups have finished, move back to front of room.

Participant feedback

 10-15 minutes

Say something like this in your own words:

Now I'd like you to share what you have discovered about your pair of items with the rest of the group. Which item did you prefer? Who would like to start?

Wait for response from group. Ask individual/group representative to stand up & demonstrate/describe features that made one product more appealing than other.

When one participant/small group has finished, move on to next. Move along quickly. There are no "right or wrong" answers. People are encouraged to express personal opinions about features that best fit personal needs. And not everyone in group may prefer same item.

When finished, ask participants to pass gadgets back to front of room. Then say something like this:

Now that you have learned about a variety of new products with universal design features that are on the market, perhaps you would like to know where to get them.

Distribute handouts "**Universal Design: Better Tools for Everyday Tasks,**" "**Where to Get Gadgets and Gizmos,**" "**Meeting Evaluation Form**" & pencil to each participant.

Point out places products can be purchased, including local stores (if any), discount stores, catalogs & internet sites. Invite them to look at free catalogs & internet sites you have collected at end of meeting.

Summary

 2 minutes

Say something like this in your own words:

It's time to review what we've covered today. You've learned:

- There is a better way to build a mousetrap 😊—smile
- *Universal design* means making products that are more convenient for everyone to use
- Something about new products that might be useful in your own home
- Where to purchase products with *universal design* features.

Set mini-goal

 5-10 minutes

Say something like this:

To practice and remember what you've learned today, it helps to set a mini-goal.

A mini-goal is something specific that you plan to do.

Find a spot on one of the handouts to write down how you will explore or decide whether a product with universal design features could make your life easier.

Here are some examples of mini-goals. You could:

- Call or send a note to a family member or friend to tell them what you would like to have as a gift for your next birthday.
- Order a free catalog, or search the internet to see what other new products are available to make life easier.
- Circle an item that you would like to purchase for yourself.



- **Stop by a local store to purchase one of the gadgets.**

Please take a few minutes to think about your mini-goal and write it down.

Wrap-up and Evaluation

5 minutes

Optional: Ask participants to look underneath their chair for taped file card that says "Door Prize." Then ask winner to come to the front of the room to receive free gadget from local merchant.

Hold up **"Meeting Evaluation Form"** & say something like this:

It will help us plan better programs in the future if you could take a moment to fill out an evaluation form. When you are finished please leave the evaluation forms in the box on the table & return pencils to table. You are also welcome to look at the free catalogs & internet sources.

Thanks for coming!

Total Time

32-47 minutes

If you plan to teach additional lessons in this series, give date, time, location, and topic for next session.

Pack up	After the meeting	
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Remove batteries from kitchen timers—so they will last longer. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Put in plastic bag that holds each gadget.
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Return gadgets to correct kit. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See “Contents of Gadget Kits,” UDBL UDBL.TG 4
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Complete “Instructor Feedback Form” <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • staple copies of “Meeting Evaluation Form” and • Attendance list to it.
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Return to: Mary H. Yearns, Associate Professor & Extension Housing Specialist 62 LeBaron Hall, Iowa State University Ames, IA 50011
	<input type="checkbox"/>	If you distributed a door prize, send thank you note to business that provided gift.