Renter's Hard Day Home Kit

Room by room fixes you can take with you, plus the letter, checklists and tracker to make it happen.

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Start here

Hi, I'm Tamera. I'm a cancer survivor, I've been a chronic pain and disability advocate since 2016, and I design homes that work on hard days through Hard Day Designs. I wrote "It's Not All in Your Head... or Your Body" because I kept seeing the same thing: the systems around us aren't broken... they just weren't designed with our outcome as the priority.

Rental homes are a good example. They're built for the "average" tenant on a good day. This kit helps you make your place work for YOUR hard days, without leaving permanent changes behind.

Why this kit is different

Most home accessibility lists stop at the same five things. You'll find those here too, in one short list per room. Then this kit keeps going, with the fixes I learned from living it:

- **29 fixes most lists skip.** Things like a padded tension-rod lean bar, roller curtain rings, a cooling station by the door, and a flare day nest by your chair.
- **Built for real hard days.** Chronic pain, heat that wipes you out, limited energy, and days when you can barely do anything. Many fixes include a low-energy version.
- **Renter safe by design.** No drilling. Removable. Designed to minimize permanent changes to your rental. Every room ends with what to keep for move-out.
- **The parts other lists leave out.** A fill-in Fair Housing request letter, a move-out restore list, a checklist sorted by energy level, and a tracker.

What's inside

1. How to use this kit (and not burn out doing it)
2. Room by room: the basics you already know, then our fixes for entry and doors, bathroom, kitchen, bedroom, living space and laundry

3. Move-out restore list: what to keep so you can put things back
4. Priority checklist by energy level
5. Reasonable accommodation and modification request letter (fill in the blanks)
6. Home fix tracking sheet

> **Go easy on yourself:** You do not need to do this whole kit. Pick the room that costs you the most energy and start there. One fix that saves you 10 minutes a day is a big win. Costs in this kit are rough ballpark ranges and change by store.

Three rules for every fix

- **Check the weight rating.** If you'll lean on it, pull on it or sit on it, make sure it's rated for that, with room to spare.
- **Keep the original.** Every knob, shower head, hinge and screw you remove goes into a labeled bag. More on that in Part 3.
- **Get it in writing.** If you need your landlord's OK, ask by email or letter and keep a copy. A text you can screenshot is better than nothing.

> **Please read:** This is general information, not medical, legal or safety advice. Check the weight rating on every product, follow the maker's instructions, and check your lease before you change anything in a rental. If you are not sure, ask a doctor, occupational therapist or other qualified pro. Fair housing rules can vary by state and city, and some housing types follow different rules.

Part 2: Room by room

Each room has four parts: the common hard-day problems, the basics you already know, our fixes that other lists skip, and a short "keep for move-out" list. Tick the fixes you want to try.

Entry and doors

Getting in and out is where hard days start and end. Round knobs, heavy doors, a lip at the threshold and nowhere to put your bags down all add up.

The basics (you may already know these)

- [ ] **Lever converters for round knobs.** These slip over or clamp onto a round knob so you can push down instead of grip and twist.
- [ ] **A portable threshold ramp.** Rubber or aluminum ramps sit on the floor over a small lip. Measure the lip height first and make sure the ramp won't slide.
- [ ] **A "landing spot" by the door.** A small sturdy table, shelf or bench so you can set things down and sit to take shoes off.
- [ ] **Over-the-door or adhesive hooks.** Keys, bag and mask go in one spot at a height you can reach without bending.
- [ ] **Motion lights.** Plug-in or battery motion lights for the entry and path to the bathroom. No wiring.
- [ ] **Door holder or wedge.** Keep a door open when you're carrying things or using a mobility aid. Never prop open a fire door.
- [ ] **Ask about swing-clear (offset) hinges.** They can add about 1.5 to 2 inches of doorway width. Swapping hinges is a modification, so ask your landlord first and keep the original hinges and screws.

Our fixes: the ones other lists skip

☐ **A cooling station by the door.**

Why: Coming home overheated can knock you out for hours if you can't cool down fast.

How: Keep a small basket by the door with a cooling towel, a spray bottle, a water bottle and a battery or plug-in fan aimed at your landing spot seat. Sit, cool, then do the next thing.

Low-energy version: Just the spray bottle and a chair. Sit for two minutes before you take another step.

Rough cost: about $20 to $50 total.

☐ **A pull strap on the inside handle.**

Why: Closing a door behind you while holding bags, a cane or from a seat means twisting and reaching.

How: Tie or loop a short strap (soft webbing or a luggage strap) around the inside knob or lever so you can pull the door shut without turning around.

Rough cost: about $5 to $10.

☐ **Big-grip key covers and a clip.**

Why: Small keys and stiff locks are hard on sore hands.

How: Put large key covers or a key turner on your keys, and clip them to your bag on a carabiner or wrist lanyard so you never dig for them.

Rough cost: about $5 to $15.

☐ **A pre-packed "out the door" bag.**

Why: Packing to leave the house uses energy you need for the trip itself.

How: Keep one bag on a hook at chest height, already packed with meds, water, a snack, a charger and anything for heat or pain. Refill it when you get home, not when you're leaving.

Low-energy version: Just put the bag on the hook. Refill it on a better day.

> **Door trouble?** Doors are one of the biggest daily energy drains: heavy doors, round knobs, doorways that are too narrow for a walker or chair. My JoJo's Doors DIY course walks you through door fixes step by step, including renter-friendly options. Find it at harddaydesigns.systeme.io/doors

Keep for move-out: Original knobs or hinges and their screws, labeled by door.

Bathroom

Wet floors, a high tub wall, a low toilet and nothing safe to grab. (This goes well past the free bathroom guide, with setup details, variations and low-energy versions.)

The basics (you may already know these)

- ☐ **Clamp-on tub rail.** Clamps to the tub wall, no drilling. Check the maker says it works with your tub type (many don't work on fiberglass).
- ☐ **Shower chair or tub transfer bench.** Sit to shower. A transfer bench lets you sit outside the tub and slide across.
- ☐ **Handheld shower head.** Screws onto the existing pipe. Keep the original head in a labeled bag.
- ☐ **Non-slip mat or treads.** Inside the tub and a rubber-backed mat outside it. Test stick-on treads in a corner first.
- ☐ **Raised toilet seat or toilet safety frame.** Locking seats and frames that use your existing seat bolts come off cleanly.
- ☐ **Floor-to-ceiling tension pole.** A transfer or security pole held by pressure between floor and ceiling. Not for drop ceilings. Follow the maker's checks and re-check tightness often.
- ☐ **Lever faucet adapter and pump bottles.** Less twisting and gripping when your hands are bad.
- ☐ **Ask about installed grab bars.** Properly anchored grab bars are a common modification request. Use the letter in Part 5.

> **Remember:** Suction cup grab bars are not safe to hold your weight. Use them only for light balance, if at all.

Our fixes: the ones other lists skip

☐ **A padded tension-rod "lean bar" by the toilet.**

Why: Sometimes you just need something to push off of when you stand up.

How: Use a heavy-duty floor-to-ceiling tension pole beside the toilet, on the side of your stronger hand. Slide foam pipe insulation over it at hand height and tape the ends so it doesn't slip. Variation: two strips of grip tape under the foam keep it from spinning. Check your ceiling is solid (not a drop ceiling) and the floor is dry and flat.

Rough cost: about $20 to $50 for the pole, a few dollars for the foam.

> **Safety note:** This is a steadying aid, not a grab bar. It is not rated to hold your full body weight. Push on it hard before you trust it, check it every week, and re-tighten if it shifts.

☐ **Roller rings on the shower curtain.**

Why: Plain rings drag and stick, so you end up yanking with your shoulder.

How: Swap in roller ball rings. Variation: add a lightweight curtain with a weighted hem, or a split curtain so you only open the half you need. Keep your old rings for move-out.

Low-energy version: Just push the curtain to one side and leave it open while you sit on the edge to undress.

Rough cost: about $10 to $25.

☐ **A motion-sensor light under the vanity.**

Why: Night trips are when you're stiff, groggy and most likely to trip.

How: Stick a dim, warm motion light under the vanity edge, and a second one low along the path from your bed. Rechargeable ones save you from hunting for batteries. Point them at the floor, not your eyes.

Rough cost: about $10 to $25, often for a multi-pack.

☐ **A lever adapter on the faucet.**

Why: Wet, sore hands and round knobs don't mix.

How: A lever adapter clamps on or slips over the knob so you can push it with a palm, wrist or forearm. Check the fit for your knob shape. Variation: a tub faucet adapter too, so you can set the water from a seated spot.

Rough cost: about $10 to $25.

☐ **A "sit-down station."**

Why: Bending to reach shampoo or soap is a lot of work on a hard day.

How: Put a waterproof stool or bench in the shower, sit on it, and mark where your hands land. Stick an adhesive caddy there. Use pump bottles so you don't squeeze or twist caps. Keep a long-handled sponge in the caddy.

Low-energy version: Skip the full shower. Sit at the sink with no-rinse wipes or a warm washcloth.

Rough cost: about $25 to $60 for the stool, $10 to $25 for the caddy.

☐ **A terry robe instead of a towel.**

Why: Drying off while standing uses energy and balance you may not have left.

How: Step out, put on a thick terry robe, and sit down. The robe dries you while you rest. Hang it on an over-the-door hook within reach of the shower.

Rough cost: about $25 to $60.

☐ **Cool air for heat-sensitive days.**

Why: Hot steam can trigger heat intolerance, dizziness or a pain flare.

How: Run a cooler shower and crack the door. A small battery fan on a shelf outside the shower helps you cool off while you dry.

Rough cost: about $15 to $30.

> **Safety note:** Keep plug-in fans and cords well away from water. Battery fans are safer in a bathroom.

Keep for move-out: Original shower head, toilet seat and bolts, any faucet handles.

Kitchen

Cooking on a hard day means standing, reaching, lifting and gripping, often all at once.

The basics (you may already know these)

- [ ] **A perching stool or tall chair.** Sit at the counter to prep. Look for one with a stable base and a weight rating that fits you.
- [ ] **Rolling cart.** Move heavy things from fridge to counter to table without carrying them. Locking wheels help.
- [ ] **Bring things down to reach.** Free-standing shelves, turntables and pull-out bins (the no-drill kind that sit in the cabinet) put daily items between hip and shoulder height.
- [ ] **Reacher grabber.** For light items up high or on the floor. Don't use it for heavy or breakable things over your head.
- [ ] **Lighter tools.** Lightweight pots, a kettle you can tip while it sits on a base, and an electric jar or can opener.
- [ ] **Anti-fatigue mat.** Choose one with flat, beveled edges so it isn't a trip hazard. Skip it if you use a walker or wheels.
- [ ] **Lever faucet adapter.** Easier on painful hands than twist knobs.

Our fixes: the ones other lists skip

- [ ] **A seated cooking zone.**

  Why: Standing at a hot stove is a pain and heat double hit.

  How: Set a countertop multicooker, rice cooker or electric kettle on a sturdy table at seated height, near an outlet. You cook sitting down and the kitchen stays cooler than with the oven.

  Low-energy version: One-pot meals only. Add, press start, walk away.

  Rough cost: about $40 to $120 if you need an appliance.

- [ ] **Non-slip liner under bowls and boards.**

  Why: Bowls spin and boards slide when you only have one good hand to hold them.

  How: Cut pieces of rubbery shelf liner and keep them in a drawer. Set one under anything you stir, chop or open.

  Rough cost: about $10 to $20 a roll.

☐ **Don't lift full pots of water.**

Why: A full pot of water is one of the heaviest things you lift in a kitchen.

How: Put the empty pot on the stove first, then fill it with a lightweight pitcher. Drain pasta with a basket insert or a slotted spoon instead of tipping the pot.

Rough cost: about $10 to $25.

☐ **Loops on cabinet knobs.**

Why: Small knobs are hard to pinch on bad hand days.

How: Tie a short ribbon or fabric loop around each knob you use daily. Hook it with a finger or your wrist. They untie at move-out.

Rough cost: a few dollars.

☐ **A "flare shelf" in the fridge.**

Why: On low days, cooking is off the table, but you still need to eat.

How: Pick one eye-level shelf for grab-and-eat food: cut fruit, yogurt, protein drinks, leftovers in single portions. Restock it on better days.

Low-energy version: Just eat from the shelf. That is the whole plan.

Keep for move-out: Any shelf liners or adhesive items to remove, and the original faucet parts if you changed them.

Bedroom

Getting in and out of bed, getting dressed and getting to the bathroom at night.

The basics (you may already know these)

- [ ] **Bed assist handle.** Some slide under the mattress and strap to the bed frame. Pick one made for adults and follow the maker's fit instructions closely.
- [ ] **Bed height check.** Sitting on the edge, your feet should be flat and knees about level with hips. Furniture risers can raise a bed, but pick sturdy, cupped risers and check that nothing wobbles.
- [ ] **Lighting you can reach.** Touch lamps, smart bulbs, or a voice assistant so you aren't crossing a dark room.
- [ ] **Night path lights.** Plug-in motion lights from bed to bathroom.
- [ ] **Lower your clothes.** A hanging closet rod extender (hangs from the existing rod) brings clothes down. Put daily clothes in the easiest drawers.
- [ ] **A chair for dressing.** Sit to dress. Keep a reacher and sock aid nearby if you use them.

> **Bed rail safety:** Adult bed rails and assist handles have been linked to serious injuries and deaths from getting trapped in gaps between the rail and mattress. Use only products made for adults, follow fit instructions exactly, and talk to a doctor or occupational therapist if you have memory problems, confusion or very limited movement.

Our fixes: the ones other lists skip

- [ ] **Cool the bed, not the room.**

  Why: Heat intolerance at night means bad sleep and a worse pain day after.

  How: A bed fan that blows air under the sheet, or a small fan on a timer at the foot of the bed. A cooling mattress pad or breathable cotton sheets help too.

  Rough cost: about $30 to $100.

☐ **A bedside caddy that tucks under the mattress.**

Why: Twisting to reach a nightstand in the dark is how things get dropped and backs get tweaked.

How: Slide a hanging bedside organizer under the mattress on your side. Stock it with meds, water, a heat or ice pack, lip balm and the remote.

Rough cost: about $10 to $25.

☐ **A 10-foot charging cable.**

Why: A short cord means your phone sits where you have to reach for it.

How: Plug in a long cable so your phone reaches your hand wherever you're lying.

Rough cost: about $8 to $15.

☐ **Slippery sheets for turning over.**

Why: Rolling over in bed can hurt and take a lot of effort.

How: Satin or silky pajamas or a satin pillowcase help you slide instead of drag.

Rough cost: about $20 to $50.

> **Safety note:** Slippery fabric can also make it easier to slide off the edge. Sit up slowly and plant your feet before you stand.

☐ **Tomorrow's clothes on one hanger.**

Why: Picking clothes and finding each piece uses energy first thing.

How: Hang a full outfit, including socks in a bag, on one hanger on a hook near the bed. Do it on a better evening.

Low-energy version: Wear comfy clothes you can sleep and live in on the worst days. No guilt.

Keep for move-out: Risers and rod extenders. Nothing to restore unless you moved closet hardware.

Living space

Clear paths and places to rest matter more than how a room looks.

The basics (you may already know these)

- [ ] **Clear a main path.** Aim for about 36 inches wide where you can. Move small tables and baskets out of the way.
- [ ] **Rugs: remove or grip.** Take up loose rugs, or use rug grippers so the edges stay flat. Curled edges are a common trip hazard.
- [ ] **Cords out of the way.** Run cords along walls, or use a removable floor cord cover.
- [ ] **Chair height.** Furniture risers, a firm cushion, or a portable assist handle can make standing up easier.
- [ ] **Rest stops.** A chair or stool partway along long paths, so you can sit before you have to.
- [ ] **Smart plugs and remotes.** Turn lamps and fans on and off from your chair or phone.

Our fixes: the ones other lists skip

☐ **A flare day nest.**

Why: When a flare hits, you don't have energy to gather what you need.

How: Keep a basket by your favorite chair with meds, water, snacks, heat and ice packs, a charger, the remote, a blanket, and a short list of who to call.

Low-energy version: Sit down and reach into the basket. That's it.

Rough cost: a few dollars for a basket.

☐ **Heat-blocking curtains on tension rods.**

Why: Sun-heated rooms can wipe you out if you're heat sensitive.

How: Hang thermal or blackout curtains on tension rods inside the window frame. No drilling. Close them on the sunny side before it heats up.

Rough cost: about $20 to $60 per window.

☐ **An over-chair or lap table.**

Why: Leaning forward to a coffee table is hard on backs and necks.

How: A C-shaped side table slides under your chair or couch so your drink, phone and food sit at chest height. A lap desk with a cushion works too.

Rough cost: about $25 to $70.

☐ **Pre-cool with a smart plug.**

Why: Coming into a hot room uses energy before you even sit down.

How: Put a fan or window unit on a smart plug and turn it on from your phone 20 minutes before you need the room.

Rough cost: about $10 to $20 per plug.

Keep for move-out: Furniture back where it was, cord covers peeled off gently.

Laundry

Laundry means lifting, bending, carrying and standing. Break it into smaller pieces.

The basics (you may already know these)

- ☐ **Rolling laundry cart or basket on wheels.** Skip the carrying.
- ☐ **Raise what you can.** A sturdy laundry pedestal or stand (free-standing) can mean less bending. Check that it's made for your washer or dryer model.
- ☐ **Sit to sort and fold.** Use a chair or perching stool and a table at the right height.
- ☐ **Lighter loads.** Smaller loads more often, and detergent pods or a pump instead of a heavy jug.
- ☐ **Reacher for the drum.** Grab socks from the back of the washer without bending over.

Our fixes: the ones other lists skip

☐ **Sort at the hamper with mesh bags.**

Why: Sorting a pile on the floor means bending and standing.

How: Line each hamper with a mesh laundry bag (one for darks, one for towels, one per person). Wash the bags as is and dump them straight into the dryer.

Rough cost: about $10 to $20 for a set.

☐ **Skip folding: hang it straight from the dryer.**

Why: Folding is one of the most tiring parts of laundry.

How: Keep hangers and a collapsible rolling garment rack by the dryer. Hang shirts and pants as they come out and roll the rack to your closet. Toss socks and underwear into one bin, no matching.

Rough cost: about $25 to $60 for a rack.

☐ **A short, sturdy seat at the machine.**

Why: Bending into a washer or dryer drum strains your back.

How: Sit on a short, sturdy stool in front of a front-loader to load and unload. For a top-loader, use a reacher for the bottom.

Rough cost: about $15 to $40.

☐ **A cool time to do laundry.**

Why: Dryer heat in a small laundry room can trigger heat intolerance.

How: Run loads early or late in the day, prop the door open, and start the dryer then walk away.

Low-energy version: Wash one load. Let it sit in the washer until a better day, and run a rinse cycle if it sits too long.

Keep for move-out: Keep any pedestal paperwork.

Part 3: Move-out restore list

Your future self will thank you. Do this as you go, not on moving day.

Before you change anything

- [ ] Take dated photos of each spot before you change it.
- [ ] Read your lease for anything about alterations, fixtures or adhesives.
- [ ] Get written OK from your landlord for anything that is a modification (see Part 5).

Keep a "Restore Bag" or box

- [ ] Original shower head (wrap the threads in tape)
- [ ] Original toilet seat and bolts
- [ ] Door knobs, hinges and every screw, labeled by door
- [ ] Faucet handles or aerators
- [ ] Copies of any landlord approvals
- [ ] Product manuals, so you know how to remove things safely

Removal kit for move-out

- [ ] Hair dryer (warms adhesive so it peels)
- [ ] Plastic scraper
- [ ] Gentle adhesive remover (test it first)
- [ ] Plumber's tape and a wrench
- [ ] Screwdriver set
- [ ] Small patch kit, if your lease allows patching

Where my Restore Bag lives: _____

Part 4: Priority checklist by energy level

Match the task to the energy you have today. Low-energy fixes still count.

Low battery (about 10 minutes, no tools, can do sitting)

- [ ] Plug in motion night lights from bed to bathroom
- [ ] Move daily items to between hip and shoulder height
- [ ] Pick up or grip loose rugs
- [ ] Put a chair where I get dressed
- [ ] Set up a landing spot by the door
- [ ] Set up a flare day nest by my chair
- [ ] Order one item from my fixes list

Some energy (about 30 minutes, simple tools)

- [ ] Swap in the handheld shower head
- [ ] Put lever converters on round knobs
- [ ] Set up the shower chair or transfer bench
- [ ] Install the raised toilet seat or safety frame
- [ ] Add non-slip treads or a mat
- [ ] Hang a closet rod extender

Helper day (needs another person or more energy)

- [ ] Clamp-on tub rail (have someone double-check it's tight)
- [ ] Padded tension-rod lean bar (have someone test it with you)
- [ ] Rearrange furniture for a clear path
- [ ] Put the bed or chair on risers
- [ ] Send the landlord request letter

My #1 priority this week: _____

Who I can ask for help: _____

Part 5: Request letter for your landlord

The plain-language version

This is general information, not legal advice. Rules vary by state.

In the U.S., the federal Fair Housing Act generally requires housing providers to permit reasonable modifications a person may need because of a disability (usually at the tenant's expense) and to make reasonable accommodations in rules, policies, practices, or services. Some exceptions apply.

- **A reasonable accommodation:** a change in a rule, policy, practice or service. Examples: a reserved accessible parking spot, paying rent on a different day to match your benefits, or allowing an assistance animal.
- **A reasonable modification:** a physical change to your home or common areas. Examples: grab bars, a ramp, or a swing-clear hinge.

Whether a particular request is reasonable depends on the circumstances.

Under the federal Fair Housing Act, tenants generally pay for reasonable modifications. In some housing programs, other federal laws may require the housing provider to pay. For modifications to the inside of a rental, a landlord may sometimes require reasonable restoration when you move out, except for ordinary wear and tear.

Good to know

- You don't have to share your diagnosis. You can say you have a disability and explain how the request helps.
- If your disability or the disability-related need for your request isn't obvious or already known, the housing provider may ask for reliable information needed to verify it. That information does not necessarily have to come from a doctor. Housing providers generally should not request your complete medical records or more information than is necessary to evaluate the request.
- Ask in writing and keep a copy. Note the date you sent it.
- The landlord can talk with you about other options that meet the same need. That back-and-forth is normal.
- If you're denied or ignored, a local fair housing organization, legal aid office or HUD can help. State and local laws may give you more protection.

Tip: Fill in the blanks below, then copy it into an email or print it. Keep it short and friendly. You can delete any line that doesn't fit your situation.

Please read: This is general information, not medical, legal or safety advice. Check the weight rating on every product, follow the maker's instructions, and check your lease before you change anything in a rental. If you are not sure, ask a doctor, occupational therapist or other qualified pro. For legal advice about your situation, contact a local fair housing organization or legal aid office.

Fill-in letter

This is general information, not legal advice. Rules vary by state.

Date: _____

To (landlord or property manager): _____

Property address and unit: _____

Dear _____

I live at the address above. I have a disability, and I am writing to ask for a reasonable accommodation / modification (circle or delete one) under the Fair Housing Act.

What I am asking for:

How this helps me use and enjoy my home safely:

For a modification only: I will arrange for the work to be completed in a workmanlike manner and obtain any required permits. I understand that responsibility for costs and any restoration at move-out depends on the circumstances and applicable law. Details:

If you need verification of my need, please let me know and I will provide a note from my provider. I'm happy to talk about other options that meet the same need. Please reply in writing by:

Reply by: _____

Best way to reach me (phone or email): _____

Thank you, (my name) _____

Signature: _____

Part 6: Home fix tracking sheet

Track what you added, what it cost, whether your landlord approved it, and where the original parts are.

Fix and room	Date	Cost	Landlord OK? (date)	Original parts kept where	Removal notes

Landlord request log

Date sent	What I asked for	How I sent it	Reply and date

Surviving isn't the same as thriving. You deserve a home that works on your hard days too.

With you, Tamera | Hard Day Designs / Impact2HEAL