

Instructions and Definitions for “Mobility Screening for Persons who are Blind or Have Low Vision”

Sighted Guide:

1. Person assisting (referred to hereafter as “guide”) a person with low vision or is blind (referred to hereafter as “follower”) approaches and alerts follower by saying follower’s name, identifying self and tells follower what is going on BEFORE touching or doing anything else.
1. 2. Guide stands close to follower, requests if follower is ready to stand up and allows follower time to come to stand and to prepare for walking.
- 2.



GUIDE: Touch the follower's elbow, forearm, or hand with the back of your hand.

FOLLOWER: Grasp the guide's arm above the elbow with your fingers on the inside of the arm near the guide's body and your thumb on the outside near you. Use a firm grasp but do not use excessive pressure.

3. STANCE



GUIDE: Stand with your arm relaxed at your side or bent at the elbow.

FOLLOWER: Your arm should be bent at the elbow, placing you one half step behind the guide. Keeping the elbow bent for long periods of time can be uncomfortable for the guide. Experienced guides and followers can often travel just as well with the guide's hand dropped to a vertical position.

NOTE: Walk at a pace that is comfortable for both people. The guide should not be "dragging or towing" the follower and the follower should not be pushing the guide.

4. **NARROW PASSAGE**



GUIDE: Continue facing forward, move your arm diagonally across your back.

FOLLOWER: Straighten out your arm and move directly behind the guide thus following effectively in single file.

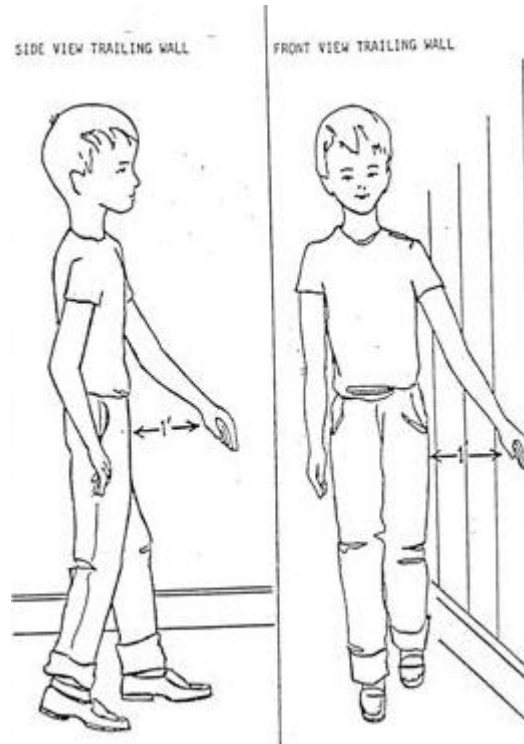
These Sighted Guide Technique pages are compliments of [The Maryland School for the Blind](#) and the [Greater Baltimore Medical Center](#) TravelVision: P.O. Box 10763, Glendale, CA 91209-0763

5. Additional instructions for stairs, changing sides, going through doorways are available on the website:

<http://members.dslextreme.com/users/kathy/z/sighted.htm>

Trailing

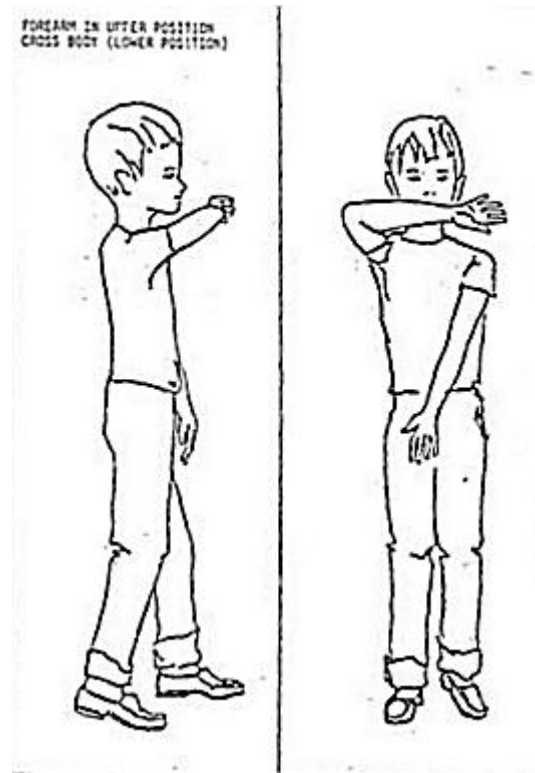
Stand close to the wall, lightly place the back of the hand on the wall with the fingers curved in toward the palm, and begin walking. Use other hand positioned in front protective technique to search for obstacles.



If person who needs to trail **uses a wheelchair for mobility and propels w/c with their hand(s)** on the hand rims, s/he angles the foot closest to the wall off the footplate and touches the toe of the shoe on the wall. This allows the person to trail the wall with their foot while using hands for mobility.

If person who needs to trail **uses a wheelchair for mobility and propels w/c with their feet**, allow wearing very lightweight foot coverings or shoes so that they have traction for mobility but they can still feel the floor surface through their footwear. Some people will not wear shoes in their home as their ability to detect changes in the floor surface is too limited with any footwear.

Self Protective Techniques



Techniques for Squaring off/Aligning

These techniques use external stationary environmental objects and are used to help establish the line of direction of travel (trail a straight edge such as a curb or building façade - alignment) or determine the angles of intersections and determining the correct path of travel from those angles (such as at a street intersection - squaring off).

Environmental Awareness

Once the home is established and the person is oriented to the location of items and areas in their home, it is imperative that the physical environment remain consistent. A person might benefit from having a tactile, auditory or olfactory cue associated with different areas in the home if they find those cues pleasurable and comforting or orienting. Examples include: a consistent room fragrance in the bathroom, a radio playing quiet favorite preferred music next to their favorite chair, a small fan blowing on low speed next to a piece of exercise equipment. Tactile cues examples include a decorative wall hanging or quilt sample beside the bedroom door, grouping of interesting dining plates securely hung next to the dining room door, a wall rack/shelf that holds baseball caps (if the person likes to wear them when leaving home) next to the front door. Incorporating the person's interests into personalized cues not only improves the orientation and mobility but conveys that this is the person's home.

Meals

Consistent furniture, chair and eating utensil locations are again, very important, when assisting someone who is blind or who has low vision. If the person is dependent for meal preparation and set up, locate the items in the same place each meal. If the person is right handed, for example, set the table with the drink at the upper right within their reach. Identify food items and locations on the plate.

Outreach Services of Indiana

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