

A day in the life of Franz Neuss

Getting up in the morning is not a great problem for Franz Neuss as he has an adjustable bed and a hoist, which together make getting in and out of bed feasible, and the time he spends in bed, altogether more comfortable.

His morning starts with a wash and shave followed by breakfast. He can manage the walk to the bathroom, and a few simple additional facilities—some grip bars, a well secured sink that he can lean on to steady himself, and a good solid seat on the toilet—make washing and dressing himself safe and practical.

He has no special diet to follow and so can eat whatever he likes, although his kitchen, which has never been adapted, does present some problems for him. Preparing breakfast is relatively straightforward, but as Franz Neuss has to use at least one crutch to steady himself, he can only really use one hand at a time, and if the oven sink and work surfaces were better organised moving around would be much easier for him. He still can see fairly well but has difficulty taking glasses and plates from the top cupboard. A little worktop refrigerator and some more user-friendly kitchen appliances would help too.



After eating breakfast and reading the papers he does the household chores. This includes washing the dishes from the day before, which he prefers to do in the morning, and this keeps him busy for some time. With the chores out of the way Franz Neuss can settle down to his favourite activity, reading and cataloguing his collection of books, which he also lends out to friends. He sits down to read in his favourite chair, and spends most of the morning there, reading and making notes.

Towards lunchtime he looks at the weather, listens to the forecast and decides whether to go shopping, visit friends or have lunch in the nearby old people's home. Twenty or thirty other people regularly take advantage of the modestly priced lunch and an opportunity to meet up. Franz Neuss often stays on afterwards to talk to friends or take part in other activities.

One or other of his two sons does a big weekly shop for him, but he likes to make smaller purchases himself. To get down to the street he has to negotiate an outside staircase, which is not at all easy, but going out shopping is important to him, as much to get out and be amongst people, because that is part of what it means to be independent.

