



## ***Taking on the Tasks of Two***



**P**aul's wife died a month ago. Now he must get on with his life. Paul opens his closet in search of a clean shirt. It's laundry time, but he doesn't know where to begin. . . . In all relationships, there is some division of daily chores. When half a couple dies, the other is left with myriad responsibilities. It might be helpful to share or trade skills with friends; do you have a special skill you might offer in exchange for help or advice?



If you want professional help, ask a friend to recommend someone to you. Check to see if the Better Business Bureau has received any complaints about a particular service or business. And beware of con artists who prey on the lonely and uncertain.

A variety of services are available for helping in the development of new skills. One good source is your Cooperative Extension Service—local Extension offices provide educational programs, literature, and answers about food and nutrition, family relationships, clothing and home care, and resource management. Many community senior centers provide information and other support for clientele. Such centers also provide great opportunities to meet new friends.

### **PERSONAL SAFETY**

If you have been used to living with a companion, you might suddenly be concerned about your safety. Living defensively, like driving defensively, makes good sense. Consider the following:

- **Never open the door without first checking to see who is there.** Use the peephole, or open the door with the chain lock attached until the visitor is identified. Both items are easily installed.
- **List only your last name and initials in telephone directories, mailboxes and doors.** It might be possible to omit your address from telephone directories.
- **Never let a stranger in to use the telephone.** Offer instead to summon help or make the call for the person.
- **Use your locks,** even when you are home or leaving for only a few minutes. Have deadbolt locks installed on all doors.
- **Keep windows securely fastened,** or install stops on those used for ventilation. For patio door security, use a piece of wood in the slide.
- **Burn lights.** It's good, cheap protection. Keep lights at all entrances to your home on at night. Leave lights in two or more rooms on to create the illusion that others are present. Timers are a good investment.



- **If you suspect your house has been broken into** while you were away—you return to find a door unlocked or lights turned on or off—*don't go in*. Use a neighbor's phone to call police and wait outside until they arrive.
- **Consider adding outdoor lighting**, especially the kind activated by motion sensors.
- **Draw the shades at night**. Close the curtains or draperies.
- **Make a quick safety check** every night before going to bed.

Your local Police Department can supply you with additional safety tips on securing your car or truck and other possessions, staying safe on the street, and driving safely.

### HOUSEHOLD MANAGEMENT

A smooth-running household is an important aid to health and happiness. Emotional, physical and financial well-being are at stake. Few people are comfortable in a dirty, cluttered living area; unkempt or unorganized surroundings can adversely affect attitudes. Health should be a concern, too; surfaces that are not cleaned properly allow germs, bacteria and household pests to multiply. Sloppy housekeeping also can cause accidents and injury.

Financially, it pays to keep your home neat and clean. Things wear out sooner when not properly maintained.

Keeping your home clean and orderly makes it a welcome place to return to after a trip. Good home maintenance techniques are not difficult. Ask a friend to help you get started; you'll have your home running smoothly in no time. Other helpful information is available in books, videotapes and classes, including *The Do-able, Renewable Home*, a publication available through the American Association of Retired Persons on simple



renovations that can be made to your home for specific physical limitations.

### FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

If someone else always has handled your money, it's time to take charge. You will need a working knowledge of banking methods. Consider these tips:

- **Know your banker**. Get acquainted with your bank's personnel so you can feel free to discuss your financial situation.
- **Avoid rush hours**. You'll get better service.
- **Take advantage of services** your bank offers to make transactions convenient, safe and easy. Consider direct deposits, insured deposits, and services such as bill payment and safe-deposit boxes.
- **Become familiar with the different types of accounts available**. To ascertain what is best for you, talk to your banker.

### TRANSPORTATION

If you have depended on a transportation source that no longer is available, think about the following options:

- **Take a driver's education course**. You'll be pleased with your accomplishment and new freedom. Consider car cost, maintenance and insurance.
- **Ride the bus**. Most large communities offer bus runs at convenient times of the day and at a variety of stops.
- **Call a cab**. Although this may be a costly way to travel, it's good to know it's there when you need it.
- **Seek community transportation**. Many communities offer van service for senior citizens and others. Some organizations provide rides for doctor's appointments or other necessary trips.
- **Call a friend**. None of us wishes to impose, but most friends would be happy to help you.

## CAR CARE BASICS

If you drive, you must maintain your car. Become familiar with your owner's manual. It will suggest a schedule for regular check-ups that could prolong your car's life, keep maintenance costs at a minimum, and maximize the resale value. Some important routine maintenance checks and warning signs include:

- **Glowing dash lights.** See a mechanic immediately.
- **Engine oil.** Check this at every fill-up. Have your car's oil changed every 3,000 to 6,000 miles, depending on whether you drive mostly in town or on the highway. Highway driving tends to extend the useful life of your oil.
- **Engine coolant level.** Check this at every gas fill-up, too—especially in extremely hot and cold weather. It only takes an extra glance while you are checking your oil *if* your car has a coolant reservoir. (Never uncap a hot radiator.)
- **Tires.** Check them visually whenever you get in your car. If you have good physical strength, consider learning how to change a tire. Be sure your spare tire is in good driving condition, and have your car tires rotated about every 5,000 to 10,000 miles.
- **Brakes.** Have your car's brakes checked while the tires are being rotated, or more often if your brakes are old, if they squeak, or if they have a different feel than usual.
- **Hoses and belts.** Look for cracks or worn areas every 4,000 to 6,000 miles.
- **Battery.** Know how to jump-start your car.
- **Keep the following items** in your car at all times: jumper cables, jack and lug wrench, first-aid kit, flashlight, owner's manual, flares or emergency flags, scraper, and blanket.

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- U.K. Cooperative Extension Publication, *Lady Beware—Be Safe in Your Home* (HE5-309).
- U.K. Cooperative Extension Publications, *You and Your Car—Car Care Basics, and Emergency Manual* (HE5-146A, HE5-147) and Videotape, "On the Road Survival Skills."

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