

Life Skills Self-Assessment

Be honest with yourself. There are no wrong answers — only information.

How to use this page: Rate yourself on each skill honestly. "Got it" = you can do this without help. "Working on it" = you've tried but still learning. "Need help" = you don't know how yet — and that's okay, that's what this is for. The goal is to know where you are so you can figure out where to go.

Name: _____ Date: _____ Reviewed with: _____

Skill	✓ Got it	Working on it	Need help	Notes / Goal
HOME & CLEANING				
Clean a toilet properly (under the rim, seat, base)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Mop a floor without leaving streaks	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Clean a bathroom top to bottom	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Get a stain out of fabric (blot, don't rub)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Clean up broken glass safely	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Empty the dryer lint trap after every load	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Change an AC/furnace filter	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Handle mold — clean it or report it	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Know where the circuit breaker is and reset a tripped breaker	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Locate the main water shutoff	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Fix a running toilet (flapper or fill valve)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Prevent frozen pipes in cold weather	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Know what to do in a power outage	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
LAUNDRY & CLOTHING				
Sort laundry correctly (darks, lights, reds separate)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Read laundry care tags	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Fold a fitted sheet	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Remove wrinkles without an iron (shower steam, spritz method)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Sew a button back on	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Care for shoes (clean, condition, don't put in dishwasher)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

COOKING & FOOD

Cook rice without a rice cooker	■	■	■	
Cook pasta (salted boiling water, package directions)	■	■	■	
Cook eggs at least two ways	■	■	■	
Follow a basic recipe	■	■	■	
Know when food has gone bad	■	■	■	
Store leftovers safely (3-4 days max for meat)	■	■	■	
Read a nutrition label (serving size, ingredients)	■	■	■	
Meal prep — cook once, eat multiple days	■	■	■	
Kitchen fire safety — lid on pan, NEVER water on grease fire	■	■	■	
Use a fire extinguisher (PASS method)	■	■	■	

CAR & ROADSIDE

Check oil level with the dipstick	■	■	■	
Check and add wiper fluid	■	■	■	
Check tire pressure and add air	■	■	■	
Check tire tread (penny test)	■	■	■	
Change a flat tire	■	■	■	
Jump start a car (red/red, black/black, black to metal)	■	■	■	
Change wiper blades	■	■	■	
Know what warning lights mean (oil, temp, battery)	■	■	■	
What to do when pulled over (hands visible, stay calm)	■	■	■	
What to do in a car accident (stop, exchange info, document)	■	■	■	

HOME SAFETY & FIRST AID

Know where smoke and CO detectors are — and test them	■	■	■	
Clean and bandage a wound	■	■	■	
CPR basics (30 compressions, 2 breaths, hands-only is OK)	■	■	■	
Heimlich maneuver basics	■	■	■	
Know your nearest urgent care and ER	■	■	■	
Dispose of medications safely (not down the drain)	■	■	■	

MONEY & DOCUMENTS

Read a pay stub (gross vs. net, check hours and rate)	■	■	■	
Write a check	■	■	■	
Set up direct deposit	■	■	■	
Know your credit score and what affects it	■	■	■	
Create a monthly budget	■	■	■	
File taxes or know where to get free help	■	■	■	
Keep financial records organized	■	■	■	
Address an envelope and mail a letter	■	■	■	
Scan and send a document using your phone	■	■	■	
Recognize a scam (IRS/bank calls, gift card requests)	■	■	■	

DIGITAL SAFETY

Use a password manager	■	■	■	
Set up two-factor authentication on important accounts	■	■	■	
Recognize smishing (scam texts) and vishing (scam calls)	■	■	■	
Know your privacy settings on social media	■	■	■	
Back up your photos (Google Photos or similar)	■	■	■	
Manage and cancel subscriptions	■	■	■	

PEOPLE & PROFESSIONAL SKILLS

Write a professional email (subject, greeting, clear ask, sign-off)	■	■	■	
Make a phone call to a stranger (prepare beforehand, be specific)	■	■	■	
Write a thank you note within 48 hours	■	■	■	
Interacting with law enforcement (calm, hands visible, rights)	■	■	■	
Deal with customer service and government agencies effectively	■	■	■	
Small talk — ask questions, be interested, give open-ended answers	■	■	■	
Deliver a genuine apology (own it, don't explain it away)	■	■	■	
Say no clearly without over-explaining	■	■	■	
Give constructive feedback without attacking the person	■	■	■	
Tipping etiquette (sit-down 15-20%, takeout 10%, delivery \$3-5+)	■	■	■	

NAVIGATION & INDEPENDENCE

Read a physical map / navigate without GPS	■	■	■	
Use public transit (read a schedule, plan a trip)	■	■	■	
Make and keep medical/dental appointments	■	■	■	
Know how to use a library (free internet, notary, legal databases)	■	■	■	
Know your voting rights and how to register	■	■	■	

Skills I'm proud of:

3 skills I want to work on first:

Supply Checklists

Check off what you have. Circle what you still need. Most of this is available at thrift stores or dollar stores.

You don't need everything at once. Start with the basics in each category — what you need to be clean, fed, clothed, and functional. Everything else can come over time. Thrift stores: Goodwill, Salvation Army, CARITAS. Dollar stores for hygiene basics. Ask your program, church, or case manager — many have donation closets.

Pantry & Food Staples

FOOD PANTRIES ARE NOT A ONE-TIME THING. Most let you come back every week or two. Use them consistently — that's what they're there for. There is no shame in it. You are not mooching. You are using a resource that exists for exactly this. Bonus: Many pantries accept volunteers. Volunteering gets you out of your head, builds community connections and relationships, can get you a letter of support for court, and lets you give back instead of just receive. Ask the pantry coordinator about volunteering. Practical tip: Dollar stores, Aldi, and Lidl are cheapest for what the pantry doesn't have. Many pantries let you choose your items — ask for staples (rice, beans, oil) not just canned goods.

- Rice (at least 2 lbs)
 - Pasta (a few boxes)
 - Canned beans (black, kidney, pinto)
 - Canned tomatoes / tomato sauce
 - Canned tuna or chicken
 - Canned vegetables (corn, green beans, peas)
 - Canned soup or broth
 - Peanut butter
 - Jelly / jam
 - Bread (or flour + yeast)
 - Oatmeal
 - Cereal
 - Crackers
 - Cooking oil (vegetable or olive)
 - Butter or margarine
 - Eggs
 - Milk (or shelf-stable alternative)
 - Onions and garlic
 - Potatoes or sweet potatoes
 - Bananas or other fruit
 - Salt
 - Pepper
 - Sugar
 - Coffee or tea
 - Soy sauce or hot sauce
 - Vinegar (white or apple cider)
 - Baking soda + baking powder
 - Flour (all-purpose)
 - Dish soap
 - Paper towels
- Basic kitchen tools:**
- One large pot
 - One frying pan (cast iron lasts forever)
 - One baking dish or sheet pan
 - Wooden spoon or silicone spatula
 - Knife (1 good chef's knife — hand wash only)
 - Cutting board
 - Can opener
 - Measuring cups and spoons
 - Colander / strainer
 - Mixing bowl
 - Plates, bowls, cups (2 sets minimum)
 - Fork, spoon, knife (2 sets minimum)
 - Tupperware / food storage containers
 - Aluminum foil
 - Plastic wrap or zip-lock bags
 - Dish drying rack or towel

Hygiene Essentials

Dollar stores have most of this. Community programs and shelters often give these away free. Ask your case manager or call 2-1-1 if you need hygiene items and can't afford them.

- Toothbrush
- Toothpaste
- Dental floss
- Mouthwash
- Shampoo (for your hair type)
- Conditioner (if needed)
- Body wash or bar soap
- Face wash
- Facial moisturizer / lotion
- Body lotion
- Deodorant / antiperspirant
- Razor + shaving cream (if applicable)
- Feminine hygiene products (if applicable)
- Washcloth or loofah
- Bath towel (your own — not shared)
- Hand towel
- Nail clippers
- Hairbrush or comb
- Hair ties / accessories (if applicable)
- Makeup basics (if applicable)
- Sunscreen (SPF 30+)
- First aid kit basics: bandages, antibiotic ointment
- Pain reliever (ibuprofen or acetaminophen)
- Antacids / stomach relief
- Cold medicine basics
- Prescription medications (current and filled)

Clothing Checklist

You don't need a full wardrobe. You need enough to be clean, appropriate for different situations, and protected from the weather. Thrift stores first — Goodwill, Salvation Army, CARITAS.

The Basics — Everyone Needs These

- Underwear — at least 7 pairs
- Socks — at least 7 pairs (include thick socks for winter)
- Bras — at least 3 (if applicable)
- Short sleeve t-shirts — 3-5
- Long sleeve shirts — 2-3
- Pants / jeans — 2-3 pairs
- Shorts — 1-2 pairs
- Pajamas / sleepwear
- Sweatshirt or hoodie
- Light jacket or cardigan
- Winter coat (warm enough for VA winters)
- Hat (cold weather)
- Gloves (cold weather)
- Everyday shoes (comfortable, sturdy)
- Dress shoes or clean sneakers (interviews, court)
- Sandals or flip-flops (optional but useful)
- Belt
- Backpack or daily carry bag
- Wallet
- Umbrella or rain jacket

Work / Interview Ready

- 1 nice outfit suitable for job interviews
- Button-down or collared shirt
- Dress pants or neat jeans (no holes)
- Clean, professional-looking shoes
- Belt that matches shoes
- 1 tie (men — can find at thrift store for \$1)
- Clothes free from stains, tears, or strong odors
- Iron or steamer access (or shower steam trick)

Clothing Care Supplies

- Laundry detergent
- Fabric softener or dryer sheets
- Stain remover spray or stick
- Laundry hamper
- Hangers (a few — prevents wrinkles)
- Small sewing kit (needle, thread, safety pins)
- Lint roller
- Shoe brush or cleaner

Home Necessities

These are the things that make a space livable rather than just a place to sleep. Priority order: bedding → bathroom basics → cleaning supplies → kitchen → comfort.

Bedroom / Sleep:

- Fitted sheet
- Flat sheet
- Pillowcase(s)
- Pillow
- Blanket
- Extra blanket for winter

Bathroom:

- Bathmat — goes OUTSIDE the tub/shower (prevents slipping)
- Tub mat — inside the tub/shower (also prevents slipping)
- Shower curtain
- Shower curtain liner (the plastic one — prevents mold and leaks)
- Shower curtain rings / hooks
- Tension rod (if not installed)
- Toilet paper (always keep a backup roll)
- Hand soap

Cleaning supplies:

- All-purpose spray cleaner
- Bathroom disinfectant spray
- Dish soap
- Sponge or dish scrubber
- Paper towels
- Trash bags (get the right size for your bins)
- Broom and dustpan
- Mop or Swiffer + replacement pads

Comfort & livability:

- Phone charger cord (keep a spare)
- Phone charging block / wall adapter
- Power strip with surge protector
- Extension cord
- Flashlight + batteries
- Scissors
- Tape (painter's, masking, or packing)
- Basic toolkit: hammer, screwdrivers, tape measure
- Extra lightbulbs

- Alarm clock or phone charger by bed
- Lamp (overhead light is harsh — a lamp is better for mood)
- Warm-tone lightbulb
- Nightstand or surface near bed
- Somewhere to put your clothes (hook, chair, small dresser)

- Toilet brush and holder
- Bathroom disinfectant spray
- Mold/mildew cleaner or bleach spray
- Toilet bowl cleaner
- Plunger (every home needs one — get it before you need it)
- Air freshener
- Mirror (if not built in)
- Small trash can with liner bags

- Vacuum or carpet sweeper
- Laundry detergent
- Stain remover spray
- Disinfecting wipes
- Rubber / latex gloves
- Microfiber cloths or rags
- Small trash cans (kitchen AND bathroom minimum)
- Toilet bowl brush + holder

- Smoke detector (test monthly)
- Carbon monoxide detector
- First aid kit
- Something on the walls (poster, photo, art — makes it feel like home)
- A plant (optional but helps mental health)
- A few books, a puzzle, or something to do at home
- Journal or notebook

Notes / What I Still Need
