

SHOPPING

16 Tools That Make Cooking With Long COVID-19 Easier and More Joyful

Patients who suffer symptoms such as chronic fatigue and brain fog can find it hard to enjoy spending time in the kitchen—these tools will help.



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Long COVID-19 symptoms can turn kitchen practices upside down. Autonomic dysfunction causes dizziness. Brain fog clouds words and actions. Painful, debilitating fatigue challenges how much you can or cannot get done on any given day. Given the extensive Long COVID-19 symptoms list, cooking can seem an impossible task. “My partner has to do all the cooking,” shares Nora Avelleyra Lieberman, a disabled artist and former childcare provider with Long COVID-19. “I can’t read, follow directions, remember anything, or trust myself with knives or the stove.”



[A Food Lover's Guide to Cooking With Long COVID](#)

[VIEW STORY](#)

People living with ME/CFS—a similar post-viral illness [that can arise after infections including](#) Epstein Barr, influenza, and mononucleosis—know these struggles well. “I have constant fatigue, feel ill standing, my arms get weak and tired quickly, and my brain gets foggy fast when upright,” says Claire Huntley, a woman in Victoria, Australia, with ME/CFS. “This limits how much time I can spend in the kitchen as it is so physically demanding. A priority is having some energy left to enjoy eating or sharing with loved ones, and for the next day.”

Huntley has learned to modify her cooking routine to retain as much joy as possible. She’s not the only one. We asked patients what tools make cooking with Long COVID-19 and ME/CFS easier, safer, and more joyful. Read on for their affordable and accessible top tips.

Mindful eating food journal

Brain fog can muddle memory. “Medical journaling is the number-one thing I’d recommend,” says Emily Taylor, senior staff for the [Long Covid Alliance](#) and the director of advocacy for [Solve M.E.](#) Use a journal to jot down grocery lists, eating goals, and symptom flares. For Hanna Petrine Munkeby, a former professional cook with ME/CFS in Oslo, Norway, such organization keeps her steady: every two weeks she plans meals, orders groceries, batch cooks, and then eats at the same time four times a day. “I don’t need to decide if I’m hungry—I just know I need food at that time,” she says.



Mindful Eating Food Journal

\$34 AT ETSY

Tall ergonomic stool

“Being on my feet for prolonged periods makes my symptoms worse,” says Jeff Siegelman, M.D., an emergency physician in Atlanta with Long COVID-19. To avoid autonomic dysfunction dizziness and drained energy, Siegelman preps ingredients from his kitchen’s barstools. But a height-adjustable

rolling stool with arms and a back helps many patients, too. “I can stay seated and scoot about, which uses less energy and helps reduce dizziness with low blood pressure,” says Huntley. Just be extra careful about knife safety if you lose some leverage, Siegelman warns.

Office Stool with Teardrop Footrest



\$113 AT GLOBAL INDUSTRIAL

Padded anti-fatigue floor mats

For unavoidable upright time, anti-fatigue floor mats help ease the load. “Cooking has always been a passion, but I can no longer stand for long periods,” says Janna Linke, a pharmacist, writer, and mother living with ME/CFS in Bondi, Australia, who swears by them. With nonslip surfaces and beveled edges, tipping and tripping reduce too.

ComfiLife Anti-Fatigue Standing Floor Mat



\$38 AT AMAZON

Food scissors

Tremors and loss of hand strength or dexterity can challenge a desire to slice and dice. “My mother is terrible at knife work—she shakes,” says Taylor of helping her mother adjust to cooking with ME/CFS. Slap food choppers [are helpful tools for those other illnesses](#). But Taylor points out they require massive energy output, which people with chronic fatigue syndromes don’t have. Instead, cooking shears with a small cutting board promote even slicing and reduce exertion. “That’s a little safer,” she says.



Oxo Good Grips Multipurpose Kitchen & Herbs Scissors

Inexpensive but always effective, these kitchen shears from Oxo distinguished themselves with their simple dependability and user-friendly design. The generously proportioned handles were comfortable to hold, the shears were lightweight but balanced, and the materials felt high-quality.

\$18 AT AMAZON

A smart wristwatch with alarms

“On more than one occasion, I’ve forgotten about a pot of boiling water and set off the fire alarm,” says Christina Baltais, a Toronto visual artist with ME/CFS. Brain fog and fatigue flares can confuse recipe steps or halt cooking entirely. Setting reminders on your phone can help combat this. But for even more assurance, a smartwatch ensures those timers always move with you.



Apple Watch SE

\$250 AT TARGET

Samsung Galaxy Watch Active 2



\$220 AT AMAZON

Auto-off hot plate

Baltais isn't the only one to almost light up the kitchen. "The last time I cooked, I set a potholder on fire, which I realized pretty late," says Marije Zwart, a woman with ME/CFS in Friesland, the Netherlands. Taylor suggests a hot plate that turns off automatically to help prevent such brain-fog fires. If you're particularly worried, consider a [rice cooker](#), [electric kettle](#), and [slow cooker](#), too.



Sunmaki Induction Cooktop with Auto-Shutoff

\$68 AT AMAZON

Lightweight dining set

Baltais replaced her dinnerware with lightweight versions to lessen the lifting load. Zwart uses heavyweight plastics for things that don't go in the oven or on the stove, too. "I let things fall a lot," she says of balance and strength loss. "If I do so with those, they don't break and require a lot of cleanup."

Modern Melamine Salad Plate, Dinner Plate, and Cereal Bowl (set of 12)



\$92 AT WEST ELM

Melamine 3-Piece Dinnerware Set



\$5 AT TARGET

Prep, freeze, and reheat containers

“Meal prep is about rationing energy,” says Baltais. “How can I get healthy food into my body with the least amount of effort?” To ensure consistent and healthful eating, cook in [batches](#)—or ask a loved one to do so for you! Freeze individual portions in sturdy containers. Then thaw and nuke as necessary. “The microwave is your friend” encourages Taylor. Embrace the reheat-and-eat strategy.

Rubbermaid 10-Piece Brilliance Leak Proof Food Storage Containers

\$15 AT TARGET



GlassLock Oven Safe Storage Containers (18-piece set)

\$39 AT AMAZON



Baking mixes and bottled sauces

No longer having the energy to cook or bake for loved ones can feel like a significant loss for avid home cooks. Fortunately, baking mixes and bottled sauces provide delicious results with less energy output. Long COVID-19 and ME/CFS can increase food sensitivities. So try gluten- and dairy-free products low in sugar and pumped with anti-inflammatory ingredients like turmeric, fruit, healthy fats, leafy greens, and nuts. “I have seen such improvement with people’s symptoms when they’re able to focus on an anti-inflammatory diet,” says Janna Friedly, executive director of the [Post-COVID Rehabilitation and Recovery Clinic at Harborview Medical Center](#) in Seattle. “That approach can also help connect food to your recovery. I encourage people to get creative in their cooking.”

Brooklyn Delhi Golden Coconut Curry



\$7 AT AMAZON



Simple Mills Almond Flour Pancake & Waffle Mix

\$8 AT THRIVE MARKET



Simple Mills Almond Flour Artisan Bread Mix

\$8 AT THRIVE MARKET



Eleni's Kitchen Alicha Kulet Sauce

\$19 AT AMAZON



Simple Mills Almond Flour Brownie Mix

\$8 AT THRIVE MARKET