



Too Sick to Go Out? Check Out These Apps for Independence

By Ilana Jacqueline

GROWING UP WITH a chronic illness made becoming “independent” a bit of a pipe dream for me. I was 19 and still yelling for my mom in the middle of the night to help get me to the emergency room. How was I going to live on my own when my disease was not only out of control, but getting worse every day? There were days I could barely get out of bed, let alone go grocery shopping, drive my car or run errands. But whether it was with courage or just a huge amount of forced ignorance, I did move out. And, I learned how to cope on the fly.

Turns out we’re living in a fabulous age of technology, and sometimes being independent is as easily found as searching for an app on your smartphone. Here are some apps to help keep your life going, even when your body has given up.

A girl’s gotta eat. And sometimes a girl just can’t get it together to go to the grocery store. So when the shelves are bare and your latest sinus infection has you seeing stars, have somebody else do the driving, walking and standing behind the lady paying in pocket change at check-out. I recently became a big fan of Shipt (www.shipt.com). It’s kind of like Uber for grocery shopping. After signing up for a membership, you can pick your local grocery store, choose your products and then someone will do the shopping for you! You can even request special items, and if the person doing your shopping has questions, he or she can text or call you. Deliveries generally show up within an hour of ordering. If you buy \$35 worth of groceries, there’s no shipping fee! If you don’t, the shipping fee is still only \$7.

Want the meals already cooked for you? Plenty of apps offer food delivery from

restaurants that don’t deliver. Apps like Grubhub (www.grubhub.com), UberEats (www.ubereats.com) and Delivery Dudes (deliverydudes.com) are affordable, convenient and have large networks.

Some days, not only can I not drive, but I can barely get out of bed. This is a problem for my dog who expects to be walked three times a day. There’s a great app called Barkly (barkly.us) that lets you choose from local dog walkers. The website states that customers are matched with local, background-checked and trained dog walkers available to take out a dog in as little as 60 minutes notice. The app delivers premium care through pick-up/drop-off notifications and detailed walk reports, including a GPS map of the route, photos from the visit, instant feed-

back and encrypted cashless transactions. a long stay in the hospital, it’s usually to get a haircut or replenish my makeup drawer. If I can’t leave the house just yet, I can sign into GlamSquad (www.glamsquad.com) whose staff will come to my apartment and do my nails, hair or makeup, without me ever having to step foot in Sephora.

I don’t even have to face another foreign dressing room again if I don’t want to! I’ve discovered a great program for fashion called Stitch Fix (www.stitchfix.com). Fill out a fashion profile and your personal stylist will send you a huge box full of clothes, shoes, bags and jewelry — all your style. Keep what you like, and use their free envelope to send back what you don’t. You can also choose a price range so you only shop for what you can afford.

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There’s nothing like getting home from a long hospital stay only to get in your car and realize you have almost no gas. Thankfully, there’s an app called Yoshi (www.startyoshi.com) that has a simple fix. Yoshi is a weekly gas delivery service that comes to you. For a small monthly fee plus the price of gas, they fill up your tank. And, you don’t even have to be there. Just leave your car in a designated area, pop the fuel tank and let them make life just a little easier for you.

Of course, if I’m going anywhere after

Turns out there are a lot of ways to be independent these days. With a phone, paid membership and a little texting, I’m practically a normal, healthy person. ■



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