Self-care Using One Hand

Dressing the Lower Body

General tips

• Buy socks with loose tops.

• Try buying clothes that are one or two sizes larger than usual. Choose easy-care garments.

• Wear clothes that are easy to fasten or that fasten in front. Replace buttons and clasps with Velcro.

• Sit in a straight-backed chair. Place your clothes within reach, in the order you will put them on.

• A footstool may help you put on socks and shoes.

To dress the lower body, follow the steps listed here. If you do not have a weak leg, skip any steps that don’t apply to you.

Socks

1. Use your good hand to help cross your legs. Place your weak leg across your good leg. (Grasp and lift under the knee.)

2. Insert your thumb and fingers into the opening of the sock. Spread your fingers to open the sock and start it over your toes.

3. Once it is over your toes, pull the sock over the foot.

How to Put on Socks

Steps 1 and 2

Step 3

continued
Pants and skirts

1. Put on your underwear with the pants or skirt at the same time. This will help you save energy. If you need a belt or suspenders, put them on the clothes before you get dressed.

2. Use your good hand to help cross your legs. Place your weak leg over your good leg. (Grasp and lift under the knee.)

3. **Dress the weak leg first.** Place both your underwear and pants or skirt over the weak foot. Pull them both up to the knee.

4. Uncross your legs and dress your good leg.

5. Stand to pull up the clothing. If you have balance problems, use a stable object to support yourself. Your therapist can also show you how to pull up clothes when sitting or lying down.

6. Pull up the pants on your good side first. Then, pull up the other side, using your elbow to keep your pants from falling down.

7. Tuck in your shirt. First fasten the pants or skirt, then pull up the zipper.

8. To take off your pants or skirt, **undress your good leg first.**

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Shoes

1. Use your good hand to help cross your legs. Place your weak leg over your good leg. (Grasp and lift under the knee.)

2. Slip the shoe over the foot. Uncross your legs and place the foot on the floor.

3. Place a finger or shoehorn in the heel of the shoe.

4. Push your foot into the shoe. If you don't have enough leg strength, use your hand to push down on the knee.

If you use elastic shoelaces, you won't need to tie your shoes. Ask your therapist if you want to learn how to tie shoes using one hand.