



Dressing: Shirts and tops

Trousers, pants and skirts

Clothes can be difficult to put on or take off. This may be due to reduced strength, poor balance, restricted movement, injuries and other health conditions. This information is to be used only as a guide. If you are unsure about what might suit you, call ILC Tas 1300 885 886 to speak to a health professional.

Dressing techniques

Many dressing difficulties can be made easier by using different techniques or equipment.

Some tips which might help you:

- Collect all items you will need and put them within easy reach before you start.
- Sit on a chair to complete some of the task, for example when getting your feet into the trousers and up to your knees. Some people may find it easier to dress in a lying position. A chair can be better than the edge of a bed as a chair is firmer, and a bed can sometimes be too high. Sitting on a chair may also be safer than sitting on a bed which could move if mounted on castors
- Allow plenty of time to get dressed or undressed. Dressing tends to take longer than undressing. Rushing makes it more difficult.
- **Shirts and tops:** Dress your affected arm first. Undress it last. This way your unaffected arm can help your affected arm.
- **Trousers, pants and skirts:** Dress your affected leg first and undress it last. Dressing and undressing your unaffected leg in that order can help.

ILC Tas can show you some different techniques to help with dressing and undressing difficulties. You can make an appointment to speak to an occupational therapist.

Dressing equipment

- A **button hook** is a piece of wire with a handle. Pass the wire loop through the button hole, hook it around the button and pull it back through the button hole. There are many different button hooks available. Some button hooks also come with a hook to help with opening and closing zips.



Zip hook



Button hook

- A **reacher** or **dressing stick** can help you to grasp your trousers, underwear or other clothes when they are beyond your reach.
- **Rubber gloves** may help you grip your clothes or assist you with adjusting them. Washing up or gardening gloves may be suitable.

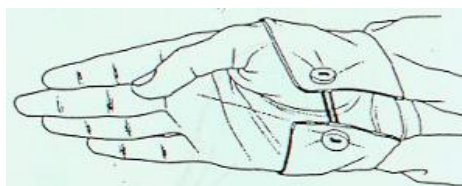


Dressing stick

Adapting your clothes

Shirts and tops:

- Add **finger loops from material or key rings** to the zipper tab to make it easier to pull.
- **Replace buttons** on a shirt or jacket with larger ones. Buttons with a slightly raised rim or toggles can be easier to do up than those which are completely flat.
- **Clothing without buttons or zips** such as t-shirts can be easier to put on and take off.
- **Give the illusion of a shirt with buttons.** Buttons can be sewn on top of a button hole and then hook-and-loop tape sewn under the button to fasten the shirt.
- Two buttons can be sewn together with elastic to create an **expanding cuff link**.



Expanding cuff link



Hook-and-loop fastening

Trousers, pants and skirts:

- Add **finger loops** to make the zips on trousers and skirts easier to pull. Finger loops can also be added to clothes to help pull them up.
- Remove all zips and buttons and add an **elastic waist band** on your trousers or skirts to make it easy to pull them on and off.



Side hook-and-loop opening on trousers

Adapted clothing you can buy

Some companies make clothing specifically designed to make them easier to get on and off. Some of the adaptations for shirts and tops include:

- Tops that open at the back. Two pieces of material overlap and attach together with hook-and-loop to create the illusion of an ordinary top.
- Tops with hook-and-loop openings. Some tops have larger openings to make it easier to put on and take them off.
- An adaptation for trousers, pants and skirts is having larger openings with hook-and-loop closure. Hook-and-loop openings can be in front, at the back or at the side. Which type of opening suits you will depend on your abilities and what you prefer.



Back opening shirt



Hook-and-loop opening

Clothing material and styles

Selecting the right material and styles of clothes can make dressing easier.

- Choose loose fitting clothes and clothes with 'stretch', such as fleecy garments or cardigans.
- Choose trousers and skirts with no fastenings, such as those with elastic waist bands.
- Select smooth and slippery fabric, such as silk blouses, which can provide some 'slip' to allow clothes to be put on and taken off easily.
- Choose shirts and tops with no fasteners so that you can just slip them on. Tops with a V-shape neck opening or larger head hole will be easier to put on and take off.
- Wear several lightweight layers, such as a shirt and a light jacket rather than one thick, heavy garment.

Independent Living Centre Tasmania

275 Wellington St, South Launceston | Tasmania | 7249 | Australia **local call** 1300 885 886 | **t** 03 6335 9200 | **f** 03 6335 9224 | **e** ilc@ilctas.asn.au | **w** www.ilctas.asn.au

Contact ILC Tas for more information



Ring **1300 885 886** to speak to a health professional.



Visit our website www.ilctas.asn.au or email us ilc@ilctas.asn.au



Make an appointment to visit our centre at 275 Wellington Street, South Launceston.



Ring us to find out when we will be visiting your area next.

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