



Equipment to assist with dressing and putting on footwear

DLF Factsheet

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INTRODUCTION

Various items of equipment are available to help you to dress and put on footwear.

It is advisable to seek advice from an occupational therapist before purchasing any equipment. A gadget may not immediately make dressing easier, and a lot of practice is usually needed. You can request an assessment from an occupational therapist by contacting your local Adult and Community Services, or local hospital O.T. department.

Alternatively, visit one of the Disabled Living Centres around the country where you will find a wide range of equipment on display and where occupational therapists can give advice to help you choose equipment for your needs. For details of the centre nearest to you, contact the ASSIST UK (Disabled Living Centres Council) (see 'Useful organisations').

DRESSING STICKS



A dressing stick is a length of wooden dowelling which has a rubber thimble at one end and a hook at the other end. A dressing stick can help if you have stiffness in your shoulders or limited reach by:

- Bringing clothes round, or pushing garments off the shoulders
- Pulling up zips, using the hook end
- Tightening or loosening shoe laces
- Pushing clothes down, e.g. pants, stockings
- Pulling up straps

REACHERS OR PICK-UP STICKS



Reachers or pick-up come in various lengths and have a variety of handle types with a pincer gripper at one end.

They can be used to:

- Pick up clothes from the floor
- Pull up underwear/trousers for people who are unable to bend at the hip
- Push off socks/underwear/trousers

BUTTON HOOKS



A button hook consists of a thick handle and a hook, or two crossed wires, which are used to assist with fastening buttons. Button hooks need quite a lot of practice, particularly when using them with one hand. It helps if the edges of the garment can be held steady, and if the button hole is on your stronger side.

ZIP AIDS

A zip aid is a piece of cord or fine chain with a hook at one end and a tab at the other to assist with doing up zips.

Clip and Pull

This canvas strap and clip device is designed to help someone to pull trousers up with use of one hand only.

PANTS CLIP

This gadget consists of two sturdy plastic clips joined with a piece of elastic. The wearer attaches one clip to the upper garments and the other to the trousers before lowering the trousers to use the toilet. The 'Pants Clip' keeps the lower garments within reach when standing up after using the toilet.

BRA ANGEL

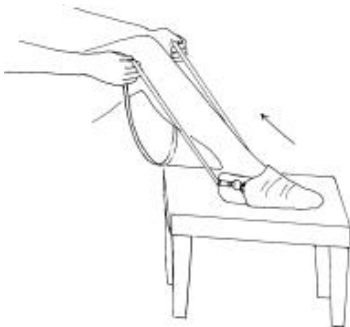
This light plastic bracket slips around the user's neck and enables him or her to keep one side of a front fastening bra in position while manipulating the fasteners on the other side with one hand.

SOCKS AND STOCKING AIDS

Sock and stocking aids can help someone who has difficulty bending forwards to put on socks, stockings, tights and compression stockings.

There are several designs available:

FLEXIBLE VERSION



The flexible version is cone shaped and made of plastic or fabric. It has two tapes/ribbons at the top. A double version can be used for tights. The fabric type is recommended to anyone who has delicate skin.

RIGID VERSION

The rigid version consists of a plastic semi-circle with one long handle.

- How to use
- Hold the gutter between the knees and ease the hosiery onto the gutter
- Place the gutter on the floor by means of the handle
- Slide the foot in. If necessary, press the foot against a firm object while easing the gutter over the heel and up the back of the leg

- Pull the gutter up until it is possible to reach the stocking by hand
- Remove the gutter and pull the stocking to the height required
- Adjust and fasten

DOUBLE GUTTERS

Double gutters are available for tights. These are rather tricky to manipulate and require a lot of practice especially if there is a high lycra content in the tights. People with poor grip or shoulder function may find pulling the tights up over the hip difficult. Pulling up with hands crossed over the body reduces the amount of shoulder movement required.

COMPRESSION STOCKINGS

Some rigid stocking aids are designed for putting on compression stockings. These compression stocking frames are created for people who cannot reach their feet but, to load the stocking on to the frame, hand strength is required. If you wear the toeless stockings, you can get a gadget made from slide sheet fabric which helps to slide the stocking on smoothly past the toes and heel. There are also some slide sheet fabric gadgets designed for enclosed toe stockings, When using the slide sheet stocking gadget you need to be able to reach down to your feet. These gadgets may help a carer to assist with dressing if the wearer's skin is delicate.

HOW TO REMOVE SOCKS, STOCKINGS, AND TIGHTS

- Standing up and shaking the body may be enough to make a stocking without lycra fall down once suspenders are released
- Socks or stockings must be pushed round the heel - you may be able to do this by using your other foot
- Pop socks and stay-up stockings will need to be pushed down more firmly than other styles of hosiery
- A long handled shoehorn can be used
- A dressing stick, a helping hand, or the ferrule of a walking stick can be used to assist pushing socks or stockings down the leg

FOOTWEAR

Putting on footwear may be difficult for a number of reasons; some people are unable to reach their feet because they cannot bend, while others may have hand or grip difficulties.

Shoes can either be fastened or slip-on. Fastened shoes are more difficult

to get into but provide firm support and have some width adjustment. Most slip-on shoes neither support the feet nor come up as far towards the instep as a shoe with a fastening.

There is a 'one handed shoe lacing' method; for details contact your nearest independent living centre.

Some trainers and walking boot style shoes have hooks at the top instead of lace holes and these enable the wearer to leave the laces tied up and hook or unhook them from one side to get their foot in and out.

If managing laces or buckles is difficult, consider velcro or zip fastening shoes which, if they can not be found in high street shops, can be bought from specialist suppliers.

- Feet should always be positioned correctly within the shoes
- The heels should be placed against the back of the shoe and any fastenings will then keep the foot in the right position
- When putting shoes on, it helps to push the shoe against a heavy object or the other foot

EQUIPMENT TO ASSIST WITH SHOE FASTENING

Lacing aids

Lacing aids enable laces to be fastened using one hand only.

- The 'no-bow' lacing aid is slid down both laces to tighten them and released by a strong pinch on the buttons on the side. It requires manual dexterity and some grip

Shoe buttons

Enable the wearer to leave the laces fastened and unhook the laces from the button which is fixed in to the top lace hole.

Elastic laces

These can be used to convert lace-up shoes into slip-ons and to put on shoes without bending down. Care must be taken to secure the tongue to one side of the vent to prevent it slipping into the shoe when sliding the foot in.

Coiled laces

These laces can be positioned in existing laces holes and pulled with one hand to tighten them.

Zip fasteners

A zip fastener can be easier to

manage than a lace; a ring added to the zip pull may make it easier to pull up with a dressing stick hook.

PUTTING ON AND TAKING OFF FOOTWEAR

Long handled shoe horns

Long handled shoe horns can assist people who cannot bend to put on their shoes. All footwear including slippers and trainers are best put on with a shoe horn, both for comfort and to prevent the back of the heel being walked on. Again, when slip-on shoes are worn care must be taken to prevent the tongue slipping down into the shoe and, if there is reduced sensation, ensure the toes are correctly positioned in the shoe.

Boot remover



A boot lever is a rectangular piece of wood with a V-shaped notch at one end. It is very useful for removing Wellingtons and other high-legged boots.

The heel of the shoe is put into the V shape of the remover. The other foot is put on the remover to hold it steady. The heel can then be eased out of the shoe.

USEFUL ORGANISATIONS

Contact your nearest service for advice and information about equipment for independence.

Or check your postcode on the list of centres on Assist UK website www.assist-uk.org

Independent Living Partnership
Lantern
Meadow Farm Drive
Shrewsbury SY1 4NG
Tel: 01743 210 820

Clothing Advice Service
Independent Living Centre
Isca House
Haven Road
Exeter EX2 8DS
Tel: 01392 687 276
www.devon.gov.uk/ilc
Contact: Philippa Greenslade

Clothes To Suit
Posture Independence and Mobility
Service Oxford Centre For Enablement
Nuffield Orthopaedic Centre
Windmill Road
Headington
Oxford OX3 7LD
Tel: 01865 227 317
Contact: by referral from any local health care professional.

Living
The Vassal Centre
Gill Avenue
Fishponds
Bristol BS16 2QQ
Tel: 0117 965 3651

Style Centre
Disabled Living
Redbank House
4 St Chads Street
Cheetham Manchester
Tel: 0161 214 5959
Email info@disabledliving.co.uk

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380-384 Harrow Road,
London W9 2HU
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We would like to thank the Clothing Advice Service at the Independent Living Centre in Exeter for assistance in updating these factsheets.



DLF online

The majority of DLF's advice is now online. If you would like advice and support to get online or information on local courses about getting online please visit one of the following websites.

Age UK

<http://www.ageuk.org.uk/work-and-learning/technology-and-internet/>

Call **0800 169 8787**

BBC Webwise

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/webwise/>

Call **08000 150 950**

Digital Unite

<http://learning.digitalunite.com/category/using-the-internet/>

Call **0800 228 9272** Or you can write to them

Digital Unite Limited, Unit 2B Poles Copse, Poles Lane, Otterbourne, Winchester, SO21 2DZ

Go On

<http://www.go-on.co.uk/>

Call 0800 77 1234

UK online centres, The Quadrant, 99 Parkway Avenue, Parkway Business Park, Sheffield, S9 4WG

UK Online Centre

<http://www.ukonlinecentres.com/>

