

ADAPTIVE CLOTHING TIPS

4/05

The INFO SERIES has been developed to provide you with general information. The descriptions do not describe the full extent of information available. Please contact one of our Independent Living Specialists for more information.

It is something we are going to do 365 days a year and at least twice a day so make it as easy as possible. Next time you are out shopping for clothes consider the type of material, where they open, and how they close. Your wardrobe should keep pace with your perpetually changing lifestyle and needs. Here are a few helpful hints!



NON-TECH IDEAS

- Choose the **right kind of fabric**.
 - Choose fabrics with a high level of washability. Use fabrics that resist shrinkage in everyday washing such as polyester or a combination of polyester. When choosing a cotton garment make sure that it is 50% polyester / 50% cotton or 65% polyester / 35% cotton blend. The garment will then not require ironing and will have a low shrinkage factor.
 - Fabric that easily expands and stretches for ease of dressing, yet retains its shape is the best. The elasticity of a fabric is determined by both the weave and blend of the material. It is important to choose fabrics that are woven into a knit or interlock. Fabric that is 100% polyester and 100% acrylic not only lends elasticity, but also reduces the amount of permanent shrinkage after initial washing. Key words to look for when purchasing garments with high levels of elasticity are: Polyester, Polyester Interlock, Polyester Gabardine, Cotton Polyester, Acrylic Knit.
 - Fabrics should contain less than 30% rayon, silk, linen or wool content.
 - Knit fabrics wrinkle less than woven fabrics, so they require little or no ironing.
- Coats and jackets lined with **slippery fabrics** like satin, silk or nylon are easier to put on than unlined garments.
- **Zippers** can often be a challenge but there are a couple of ideas to help. A leather loop on the end of the zipper can work well. You can also buy different sizes of key rings at the local hardware store and put them on the zipper tabs of the clothing. It makes the zipper easier to grasp and hold while pulling it. Sew them on pants zippers, jacket zippers, and purse zipper - the list goes on!

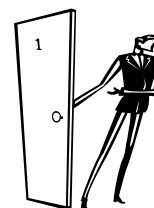
- Use clips to help get **out of reach clothes**. Here's a helpful and inexpensive idea for people with difficulty managing lower body clothing during dressing or toileting. For example when they stand up their pants fall down out of reach. Also for people who must use one hand to hold onto the grab bar and one to pull up lower body clothing. Take two small (2-4 inches) 'chip clips' and tie them to each other with string or ribbon about 12 inches long. Attach one clip to the front of the pants and one clip to the front of the shirt before standing up. When you stand up the pants (or underwear) stay within reach. The clips can be kept next to the toilet (or next to the bed). These clips can be found in dollar stores and department stores for under \$2.00.
- **Choose clothing** with larger openings, this makes it easier to put the garment on over the head in a seated position or effortlessly step into the garment opening with minimal struggle.
- To **reach items** use a back scratcher, kitchen tongs or coat hanger to extend reach.
- **Sew pull loops** to the top of socks.
- Use **Velcro closures** on shoes instead of laces. This also helps when feet swell.
- **Replacing buttons** with Velcro closures makes dressing and undressing faster.
- **Long front zip fastenings** help with hand dexterity i.e. zip-front dresses.



LOW TECHNOLOGY

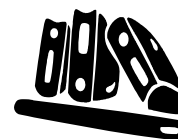
- Find a local **seamstress** to replace buttons with Velcro. Think creatively, one seamstress made custom gloves of warm, insulated material with Velcro to close them tightly.
- Use a **dressing stick** if you have shoulder weakness to get your coat or shirt on or off. (\$10.00)
- **Zipper & Button Puller** for those with weak or arthritic fingers, there's probably not a more difficult task than buttoning a button! Easy to grasp and use, this product eliminates stress and frustration by pulling the button or zipper into position. (\$5.00 – \$6.00)
- **Elastic shoelaces** allow the shoes to be tied and then slipped on the next time without untying. (\$4.00)
- **Sock aides** assist with putting on socks. There are several to choose from, even ones to assist with panty hose. (\$5.00)
- Extra-long **shoehorn** is ideal for people who have limited mobility and difficulty bending. (\$15.00.)

- **Iron Safety Guard** - A metal iron guard protects the hand from getting too close. Designed for people with visual and sensory limitations. (\$40.00)
- **Steam Iron** - Use a steamer to get the wrinkles out. They are often lighter weight and smaller than a conventional iron. (\$25.00)
- **Raised washer and dryers** are now available and are helpful for people in wheelchairs or with limited bending ability. (\$1,200 – 1,500)



TECHNOLOGY CLOSET

Society's Assets operates a “technology closet” that currently has about 500 items. Equipment can be tried out before making a purchase. Over the years assistive technology has played an increasingly critical role in assisting individuals to live independently in their homes. Contact an Independent Living Coordinator at Society's Assets to see if we have the item you are looking for.



RESOURCES

- **Stores** - - Many of the items recommended are available at stores in the area.
- **Catalogues** - - Check with Society's Assets. Catalogues on assistive technology are available in the resource library.
- **Used equipment** may be available. Keep in mind that some equipment is very specialized to an individual's needs. Contact the Independent Living Coordinator for a list of resources. There are some local organizations that offer equipment recycling, as well as, state organizations and Internet sites. For mobility equipment there is a Wisconsin Wheelchair Recycling project.
- **Info Sheets** - - Society's Assets has Info Sheets that list resources of where to order items. There are Info Sheets for telephones, clothing, driving, hard of hearing equipment, visual aid equipment, and physical limitations.
- Check **web sites**. If you don't have a computer, the libraries have computers you can use.

FUNDING



There are many funding sources. Each source has its own regulations, limits and eligibility requirements, and each situation is different. Don't overlook the possibilities of combining funding sources to reach your goal. Here are some options to check out.

- Medicaid
- Medicaid Waivers
- Medicare
- Private Insurance
- Veteran's Benefits
- Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
- Workers Compensation
- Family Support Program
- Disability Organizations
- Private Grants
- WisLoan
- County Funded Programs

The listings on this Info Sheet should in no way be construed to constitute an endorsement of an agency or organization or its service, nor should exclusion be construed to constitute disapproval. The information that appears in this publication was obtained from the agencies/organizations listed above.

**Racine Office**

5200 Washington Ave. #225
Racine, WI 53406
(262) 637-9128 V/TTY
(800) 378-9128 V/TTY

Kenosha Office

5727 6th Ave
Kenosha, WI 53140
(262) 657-3999 V/TTY
(800) 317-3999 V/TTY

Elkhorn Office

615 E. Geneva Street
Elkhorn, WI 53121
(262) 723-8181 V/TTY
(800) 261-8181 V/TTY

Alternative Format Available Upon Request