

DRESSING

Dressing ourselves each morning is an activity that we can easily take for granted. The ability to get dressed on one's own is an important part of maintaining independence and self-esteem. With Parkinson's disease (PD), however, and the associated stiffness and tremors, precise movements (such as doing up buttons) can become very difficult, making dressing a lengthy and frustrating chore. Here are some suggestions for making dressing a little easier:

- Allow enough time to dress independently without being rushed. Accept help, even if it means you might be late.
- Put your clothes on the bed and, as much as possible, sit down to dress.
- Always dress your worst side first.
- Women should avoid dresses, skirts and slacks with back closures.
- Go for comfort during the day with loose, casual, easy-to-wear clothing.
- However, don't forget to dress up for special functions. You will look good and feel better.
- Simplify your dressing area and closets so that clothing is as easy to reach as possible. For example, don't store shoes under your bed.
- Look for dressing aids in medical stores or catalogues, but make sure you can use them and that they are helpful before you purchase them. An occupational therapist can advise you.
- Investigate sources of clothing and shoes with Velcro closing and elastic waists and try to choose clothes that do not need ironing or dry cleaning (to save you a trip to the cleaners).

Source: Pacific Parkinson's Research Centre, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, BC

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