

Unilateral Cerebral Palsy Advice

Dressing Techniques

Lay out your clothing the night before in the order you would put your clothes on. For example:

1. Underwear (pants, bra, socks).
2. Trousers/skirt.
3. Shirt.

Place your affected side into the clothing **first when putting on clothes** and to remove that side **last when removing clothes**.

- **Bras-** Choose a bra with as few hooks as possible. Try bras with front fastenings or bra's with no fastenings, which slip over the head. The back of the bra could also be adapted by attaching a piece of Velcro.
- **Socks** – Tube socks do not have a heel so it does not matter which direction you put them on. Buy socks that are a little larger than needed so that they're not so hard to pull up with one hand.



Use stronger hand to put socks over the toes and the heel.



Use the weaker hand and help guide the sock and then pull sock

- **Shirt-** keep shirt as big as possible with fewer buttons to close. Make sure the hole for the head is not too tight.

Place the shirt on your lap, face down with the top of the shirt furthest away from the body.



Use stronger arm to help weak arm, slide inside sleeve passed the elbow.

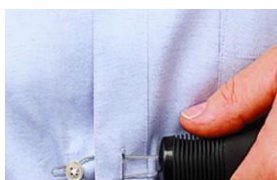


Pull shirt over your head and stronger arm.



Pull stronger arm in sleeve. Pull down shirt.

- **Buttons- Hook and eye fastenings** can be easier to do up one handed. The **easy grip button hook** can be used, making it easier to do up or undo buttons of every size.



- **Pants-** Use loose fitting pants and elasticated waistbands. **Loops can be sewn inside the waistband** of the pants on the side of the weak arm. You can hook the weak hand into the loop to pull the pants up.



Use stronger arm to put opposite foot into pant leg. Use weak arm to help guide the pants.



Use stronger arm to pull foot into pant leg. Use weak arm to guide the pants.



Use stronger arm to pull the pants from the back. Use weak arm to pull pants up from the front.



- **Tie-** Use clip on or elasticated ties.
- **Laces-** Alternatives to needing to tie laces include using **Velcro fastenings, springy spiral laces** or **lace locks**. Springy spiral laces are designed for easily taking off and putting on shoes without the hassle of tying. Only one hand is needed to pinch or pull the locks to loosen or tighten the laces. All available from www.amazon.co.uk



- **Zips-** A key ring attached to a zip can help to grasp the grip more easily.
- **Coat-** Hang your coat over the back of the chair with the lining facing outwards and the sleeves freely hanging. Stand with you back to the lining and put each arm in turn into the sleeves. Bend down to get the coat onto the shoulders and then move up and away to release the coat.

Washing Techniques

- **Long handled sponges** can make it easier to reach all areas when washing.
- **Long handled brush or comb.**
- **Nail clipper board** securely attached to a plastic base on suckers to provide stability whilst clipping.
- Experiment with different **tooth paste dispensers**.
- **Shampoo/conditioner/shower gel dispensers** are easy to use with one hand. These can be mounted on the wall or a pump bottle may be helpful.
- Advice on how to **shampoo your hair** using one hand- www.chasa.org/shampoo-with-one-hand/
- Advice on how to **blow dry hair** using one hand- www.chasa.org/living/hair/

Eating Techniques

- **Free hand trays** can allow for transporting items on a tray with one hand.



- **Plate guards** can be used to prevent food sliding off the plate when eating one handed and can fit onto most normal plates.



- Specialist '**sporks**', '**knorks**' and '**dyna forks**' combine spoons and fork, knife fork and spoon, and knife and fork, and can allow for cutting and spooning/forking food with one hand.



Top Tips

- Leave extra time in the morning to leave for school.

Top Tips for getting around the school and organisation.

- Have a **copy of your timetable on the wall** or somewhere easily accessible so that it can be used to check what is needed for each day to pack in your bag the day before.
- Have a **note in diary** requesting to leave lessons 5 minutes early to allow extra time to get to the next lesson, while the school is less busy.
- Allow **extra time** for completing tasks.
- Use a **locker or tray** to store books, and change over at break times to avoid having to carry too much.
- Introduce a **buddy system** for carrying lunch trays.
- **Colours code your timetable** so it's clear to see which lessons are on each day. If possible match the colours to the exercise books used in each lesson.
- Have a **school map** to aid with remembering location of each class.
- Request a **clear written copy of instructions**.

- Ask the teacher to **break tasks down** into more manageable units (so instructions are easier to follow) or draw up your own work plan for each task.

Posture in sitting

- Make sure **appropriate supported seating is available if required**. Ensure the writer is seated comfortably, with both chair and table or desk at a suitable height and feet flat on the floor.
- If the table is too high try using a **cushion to sit on** and a **box under the feet**.
- **Sit facing the front or teacher** (to see the board clearly) and away from the aisle to reduce the risk of distraction, with enough room to place the affected arm, and to allow for all equipment to be placed in easy reach.
- If you are using a computer, the top of the monitor/screen should be at **eye level**.

School activities if there are handwriting difficulties

- Use a **dicta-phone** to record homework instructions (or ask special permission to use this setting on phone).
- Use a **dicta-phone** to record the lesson so that if you miss any details, have difficulty with remembering or are unable to take notes quickly they can be played back.
- Consider using a **writing slope** to reduce the effort needed to hold the pen in an appropriate position. An A4 ring binder can be a more subtle alternative for this, but try to ensure the surface the writer will be leaning on is smooth.
- **Blobs of 'blu-tack'** can help anchor paper or a clip board can be used to stabilise the paper easier with the affected hand and be moved easily to adjust position.
- Use a **black fine-liner pen for stencils and math's drawings** with instruments as it gives a clearer outline.
- **Trial different pen grips**, or **molded chunkier pens**- pen grips can be used on a variety of different pens/pencils but molded pens can be less noticeable.
- Consider a **slanted desk** (20 degree angle) for doing homework.
- Use **non slip matting** to reduce the risk of items rolling off the desk (especially when desk is slanted).
- **Desk clamps** can be used to fix books to the desk so that they can be kept on the correct page freeing hands for writing or typing.
- **Use of computers** can ease problems with handwriting and setting out of work.
- Specialist **one handed keyboards** are available. Available from: www.matron.com
- **Key guards** can prevent tapping the wrong keys when using both hands. Available from: www.shop.adapt-it.co.uk.

School activities

- **Pair up with someone for practical experiments** so that you can do as much as you are able, safely and instruct a peer on anything you aren't physically able to do.

- Use **spring-assisted scissors** or those with a larger space for more fingers when completing cutting activities.
- When comparing (measuring) bar charts or lining object use **a line drawn on acetate to divide blocks**.
- **Rulers and protractors with handles** can be easier to stabilise with the affected hand.
- A **magnetic board, used with rulers and geometry instruments** also backed with magnetic strips can help with drawing graph and diagrams. (Pre- prepared diagrams and graphs may also be helpful). 'Discovery' & 'Achiever' by Helix have these. Available from: www.mapedhelix.co.uk
- Using **sheets of paper attached to clipboards** may be easier to manage than exercise books.

One handed cooking techniques

- **Dycem and stay in place mats** (non-slip matting) can help keep crockery in place for eating, and can be brought in rolls to cover large surfaces for food prep.
- **Snap on aprons** can be put on one handed without the need for tying.
- **Twist and turn jar openers** can be fitted under kitchen wall cabinets to allow you to just grip the jar when opening it.
- A one handed **spreader board** can be used for making toast and sandwiches. It hooks onto the edge of the work surface and has 2 angled edges to keep the bread in place whilst spreading one handed.
- **Safety cooking basket and strainers** can left in the pan while cooking and used to strain veg without the need to lift heavy pans.
- **Mini jug kettles** can be easier to carry and pour one handed and a jug can be used to fill the kettle. Or a one cup kettle that only boils enough for one cup can be used to avoid having to tip the kettle.
- **Grater and peeler boards** (frame with detachable blade and optional spike to hold vegetables in place), can be useful for holding veg in place whilst peeling and chopping.
- **Electric tin openers** (either hand help or wall mounted) can allow for opening tins one handed.
- **Safety cooking baskets and strainers** can be left in the pan while cooking and used to strain veg without the need to lift heavy pans.

Top tips for the end of the day

- Do your homework when you get home.
- Pack your school bag with all items that you need for the next day.
- Lay out your clothes, ready for the morning.
- Prepare your lunch for school.
- Use a checklist for preparing homework or school activities.

Useful websites to go to for further information

- <http://www.hemihelp.org.uk/>
- <http://www.specialdirect.com/>
- <http://www.abilitysuperstore.com/>
- <http://www.anythinglefthanded.co.uk/acatalog/index.html>
- www.amazon.co.uk

- <http://www.livingmadeeasy.org.uk/>
- www.abilitysuperstore.com/
- www.lakelank.co.uk/Homepage.action
- www.completecareshop.co.uk/kitchen-aids/food-preparation-aids/

Top tips for parents

- Allow **additional time** for your child to dress.
- When your child is learning new tasks, it may be best to let them **start on a weekend** when the family doesn't feel rushed to get out the door to work or school.
- Use **visual cues to help orientate clothes**, for example labels on the back of clothes, logos on the front or coloured heels and toes on socks.
- **Break the dressing activity into small, straightforward steps.**
- Ensure your **child is well supported when dressing**. Sitting on a chair or stool can help.
- **Establish a routine**, for example pants first, then shirt, then socks and follow this routine each time.

Contact details

Children's Therapy Services

Telephone number: 0300 019 2936

For further general health-related information, please ask the relevant department for an information prescription or contact:

Patient Experience
University Hospitals Dorset NHS Foundation Trust
Longfleet Road
Poole
Dorset
BH15 2JB

Telephone: 0300 019 8499

www.uhd.nhs.uk

We can supply this information in other formats, in larger print or have it translated for you. Please call the Patient Experience Team on 0300 019 8499 or email patientexperienceteam@uhd.nhs.uk for advice.

If you wish to make any comments or to ask about any research evidence used to write this leaflet, please contact the Patient Experience Team on 0300 019 8499, write to the Patient Experience Team (address above) or email patientexperienceteam@uhd.nhs.uk

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