

Dressing

The following guidelines may need to be modified if your patient has already developed tightness, contractures or if medical conditions interfere.

Starting Position

Begin with your patient sitting in a chair or a wheelchair. If necessary have them transfer from the bed to a chair next to the bed. The stroke patient should not get dressed lying in bed. Not only is this difficult for them, it teaches abnormal patterns of movement. Sitting on the edge of a hospital bed is also not the best choice, as it is too soft (making it difficult to maintain balance) and too high (making it difficult for patients to have their feet flat on the floor with a good base of support). Place your patient's clothes on the bed, toward their strong side.



Handling

For safety, **always** stay on their involved side in order to give assistance.

Donning Underclothes and Pants

1. Begin dressing with the involved side. Have the patient cross their weak leg over their strong leg. Incorporate the weak upper extremity by clasping their hands together.
2. Release their hands and pull the pant leg over the weak foot. Do not allow the weak arm to be trapped in their lap as this can contribute to shoulder pain. Allow the hand to rest on a surface. When able, the patient can use the involved hand as needed.
3. Clasp hands again to uncross weak leg. If the patient has enough movement in the weak leg to actively uncross the leg, (without assistance) encourage them to do so.
4. The patient places the strong foot into the pant leg (without crossing the legs). This step is often difficult for patients because they must transfer weight to the weak leg while picking up the strong leg. You may need to assist the patient in weight shifting toward the weak side.
5. The patient pulls the pants up to their knees.
6. The therapist stands on the patient's weak side. While holding onto the waistband, the patient leans forward and stands with assistance (as needed). See *Standing Safely* for detailed instructions.
7. In standing (or if that is too difficult, in sitting) the patient zips and buttons the pants.
8. The therapist helps the patient sit down (see *Standing Safely*).



Donning Shirt

1. Position the shirt across your patient's knees with the armhole visible and the sleeve placed between the patient's knees.
2. Have the patient bend forward at the hips and place their weak hand in the sleeve. The forward flexion helps to inhibit lower extremity extensor tone and, at the same time, bringing the scapula forward helps to inhibit upper extremity flexor tone.
3. As the arm drops into the sleeve, the patient brings the collar up to the neck.
4. As the patient sits upright, place the strong arm into the sleeve.
5. Buttoning the shirt from the bottom to the top helps to keep it straight and buttons in proper alignment.



Variations

For T-shirts and pullover shirts, place the weak arm in the sleeve, then the strong arm, and then gather up the front of the shirt and place over the head.

Donning Shoes and Socks

1. Have the patient cross their weak leg over their strong leg (as previously described).
2. Begin with the weak foot to don shoes and socks.
3. Cross the strong leg over the weak leg and put on the sock.
4. Step into the shoe.



⌘38 Pause and Practice

Note your own movement patterns. Note how environmental factors play a roll in movement patterns.

Notes
