

DRESSING

What is it?

There are many reasons that dressing can be a challenging skill. Difficulties with fine motor skills, motor planning, attention and sequencing can all impact upon an individual's ability to manipulate fasteners (i.e. buttons, zippers, snaps, laces) and organize getting dressed or undressed.

How can I help?

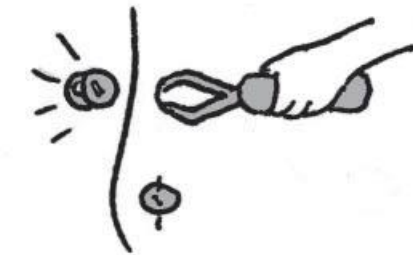
The following are some strategies and adaptations that may assist you to learn the skills needed to become more independent with dressing.

- ☐ Practice dressing with fasteners at home first. Once you are able to succeed with this skill at home, then wear these items to school.
- ☐ Sit down on a chair or stool when dressing to help with balance and stability.
- ☐ Dressing in front of a mirror may be helpful.
- ☐ Use a visual schedule to help sequence the order of putting on and taking off clothing items.
- ☐ Loops can be sewn inside the waistband of the pants on the side of the weak arm. The individual can hook the weak hand into the loop to pull the pants. It is best not to use belts, but if you have to try using magnetic buckles.



- ☐ Leave extra time when getting dressed so you do not feel rushed.

- ☐ Wear loose-fitting clothing (such as adjustable waist pants, sweat pants and v-neck shirts). Avoid back or side openings as these are more difficult to do.
- ☐ If you have one side of your body that is weaker than the other, dress your weaker side first. Undress your weaker side last.
- ☐ Practice with large buttons first as they are easier to handle than small buttons. Adult-sized cardigans are often useful as the buttons are usually big and the buttonholes loose.
- ☐ First, practice doing fasteners with the item in front of you. Position the piece of clothing or shoe on a desk or table. Once this skill is mastered, then practice while wearing the clothing or shoe.
- ☐ Button hooks can be helpful for doing up buttons. Push the hook through the button hole, catch the button in the hook, and pull it through.



- ☐ The “upside down” method is another way to put on shirts with buttons and jackets. Place the garment on the floor or your lap. The collar should be toward you and the front should face up. Reach into the arm holes and then lift the garment up and over your head.
- ☐ Use a jacket with a large zipper (i.e. big zipper “teeth”). Once this is mastered, try using a smaller zipper (i.e. small “teeth”).
- ☐ Use large ring or key chains to create a larger zipper pull for a better grasp.
- ☐ Replace the zipper on your jacket with Velcro.
- ☐ Tube socks are much easier to put on than socks with heels and eliminate the problem of putting socks on backwards.
- ☐ Put talc powder or cornstarch on your foot and inside the sock to help your foot slide into the sock easier.
- ☐ Fold or roll top part of the sock down over the foot of the sock before putting them on.

- ☐ Sew a loop on the top inside of the sock so you can hook the weak hand into the loop for more control.
- ☐ A sock aid can be useful for putting on socks. Talk to your OT about this if you are interested in this piece of equipment



- ☐ Velcro fasteners on shoes eliminate shoe lace tying. Elastic shoelaces stay tied and simply stretch open when you put on or remove your shoes.
- ☐ Both dressy and casual shoes are available in slip-on styles.
- ☐ A simple shoe horn can be helpful when it comes to putting on shoes and boots, whether laced, buckled, or slip-on. Shop for a long-handled model to reduce bending and straining.
- ☐ If gloves are difficult for you to wear, try mittens instead. They are warmer and much easier to get on and off.