



A Handy Guide to managing everyday activities with one hand



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The Independent Living Centres Australia (ILCA) National Assistive Technology Online Resource Website has been an invaluable reference for product information and pictures.

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Contents

Introduction	3	In the kitchen	19
Strategies for managing activities with one hand		Food preparation	19
Stabilise objects	4	Stabilising	19
Learn new ways of doing things	4	Cutting, slicing, grating, peeling and spreading	20
Try equipment	4	Opening containers	21
Self care	5	Opening Jars	21
Bathing and showering	5	Opening Cans	22
Toileting	6	More hints for making cooking easier	23
Hair care	7	Meal time	25
Medication management	7	Cutlery	25
Dental care	8	Crockery	25
Nail care	8	Pouring	26
Dressing	9	Moving things around	26
Adapted clothing	9	Other household tasks	27
Assistive dressing aids	10	Washing up	27
Doing up buttons	10	Cleaning and laundry	27
Using dressing sticks	10	Bed making	28
Zip options	10	Mobility	29
Pulling on socks and compression stockings	10	Getting about	29
Solutions for shoes	11	Turning in bed	29
Dressing techniques – step-by-step methods	13	Communication	30
One-handed method of shoe lacing	13	Telephone use	30
One-handed method of putting on a bra	14	Computer use	30
One-handed method of putting on shirt/blouse/cardigan	15	Writing	31
One-handed method of putting on a heavy coat	15	Recreation	31
One-handed method of putting on a jumper	15	Sewing, knitting, craft and hobbies	31
One-handed method of removing a jumper	16	Sports	32
One-handed method of putting on trousers	16	Card Games	33
One-handed method of putting on socks and knee-high stockings	16	Reading Books	33
One handed method of tying a tie (including adaptations)	17	Gardening	34
	18	Vehicle adaptations and access	36
		Driving	36
		Useful resources	37
		Useful contacts	37
		References	38
		Contact ILC Tas for more information	38



Introduction

The loss of use of an upper limb (arm and hand), totally or partially, can occur through amputation, trauma to the limb or surgery, and some neurological, neuromuscular and congenital conditions.

If you have lost the use of your upper limb your ability to manage everyday activities might be affected in a number of ways. Loss of use may be temporary or permanent. You may have only one upper limb, or have little or no function in an upper limb because of reduced strength, impaired sensation and poor muscle control. You may have lost the use of your previously dominant hand. If you have had a stroke, your memory, mobility, coordination, balance as well as the ability to do two-handed activities may be affected.

Whatever the cause, loss of ability to use an upper limb affects the way you are able to perform daily living and personal care tasks. There are many ways in which people have been able to adapt to the loss of use of their upper limb, and these often do not require the use of assistive aids. However, for some people, assistive equipment can greatly enhance their ability to perform everyday tasks.

This publication describes techniques and a range of assistive devices which may help you to manage many activities using one hand.

Although you may have reduced function in your hand, you may still be able to use your arm to help you to accomplish a task. This could enable you to perform an activity without assistive devices, or help you to use standard equipment or devices designed specifically for one-handed use. Maintaining flexibility, strength and good balance will also help you to manage these activities.

Occupational Therapists at ILC Tas can assist with advice about techniques and useful equipment to help you to be more independent with activities of daily living if you have lost the use of your upper limb.

Contact ILC Tas **1300 885 886** for specific information about products referred to in this publication.

Strategies for managing activities with one hand

Stabilise objects

Stopping an object from moving will make it easier to perform a task with one hand. This could be achieved by securing the object to a firm surface with an aid such as a clamp, or by putting it on slip-resistant material. You may be able to use your affected arm or hand, or your body, to hold the object in position.

Learn new ways of doing things

There are techniques for doing many activities if you have lost the use of one arm and/or hand. An occupational therapist would be able to help you learn how to use these techniques. They may involve using assistive devices or they may require learning different ways to do an activity. Sometimes people develop their own techniques according to their needs and the nature of their disability.

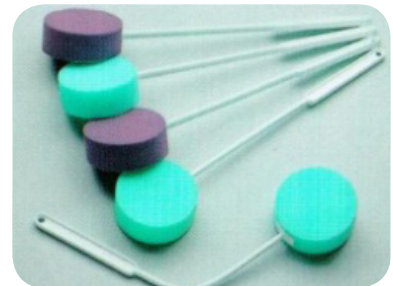
Try equipment

Some adapted or specialised devices make tasks easier. Choose items carefully. Buy equipment that will help you overcome the limitations imposed by your disability and enable you to function more efficiently. All equipment should be versatile, durable and easy to clean. Consider the location and amount of the storage space you will need for the equipment. Many items can be purchased from large hardware outlets, houseware shops and department stores, or they may be ordered (often via the internet) from suppliers. ILC Tas occupational therapists can give you information about helpful products. They can also assist you to search for products on the Independent Living Centres Australia online resource website and give you impartial advice so that you can make informed decisions about what is best for you. Contact ILC Tas **1300 885 886**.

Self-care

Bathing and showering

- Long handled brushes and sponges, with shower gel applied, can enable you to wash hard to reach places.
- A long handled toe washer is designed to assist washing between the toes with minimal bending and may enable you to wash your toes using one hand.
- Soap in a wash mitt can help you to manage soap with one hand. Soap can be suspended in a stocking tied to taps, rail or wrist. This is useful if you have difficulty bending to pick up soap. Liquid-soap in a pump style bottle may be easier to use.
- Automatic dispensers with a one-touch or touch-free sensor supply liquid soap, toothpaste, hand lotion, shampoo and other personal cleansing products.
- A single lever mixer tap can be operated with one hand. The tap blends hot and cold water and is operated by lifting the lever handle up to 30 degrees to set flow. It is rotated within a 90 degree arc to control temperature. The lever is broad and flat. Mixer taps can be installed in showers or over basins and sinks.
- Electronic sensor taps regulate water flow without the need to physically turn taps.



Tips:

- Soap-in-a-sponge can be inexpensively made by making a split in one end of a chunky bath sponge and inserting a piece of soap. A piece of cord can be attached for suspending the sponge from the taps or wrist.
- For one-handed hand washing, rub the back of your hand against a facecloth placed on the edge of the sink. When using public toilet facilities use the same technique with paper towel.
- Electric hand and body dryers can be used if they are easier than towel-drying.
- A large towelling bathrobe may help you to dry hard to reach places such as your back and arms.
- To wring out a facecloth, wind it around a tap and twist the ends together, pulling it tight. Alternatively use a small facecloth and squeeze it out with one hand.
- Shaving with one hand is often easier and safer with an electric shaver.
- Sitting on a chair or stool when showering will provide stability, particularly if you have balance problems.



Toileting

- Support rails which are secured to the rear of the toilet pan with bolts will remain still when you lean on one side when standing up or lowering yourself onto the toilet.
- A floor-fixing device can be used with some freestanding toilet surround rails to prevent them from tipping sideways if one side is leaned upon.
- A lightweight bottom wiper with a long, angled handle, may assist you to clean your bottom after toileting, particularly if you have limited dexterity and reach. You can hold the wiper between your knees, or use your affected arm to anchor it against your body, while winding toilet paper, or a wet wipe, around the plastic end and securing it into a recessed opening. Bottom wipers are generally designed to be used from the front. Hold the wiper in your unaffected hand and use it to reach your





buttocks. One model has a push button to release the paper after use without being touched so that personal hygiene is not compromised. Folding models with carrying containers are available.

- If bottom wiping is difficult, a bidet unit which replaces a conventional toilet seat can be fitted. These fit most standard toilets. The electric models provide adjustable temperature, pressure and range for the cleansing spray jet, and adjustable warm air drying and seat temperature. It may be possible to install this type of bidet in conjunction with a spacer to raise the seat height, and a support rail secured to the rear of the toilet pan.



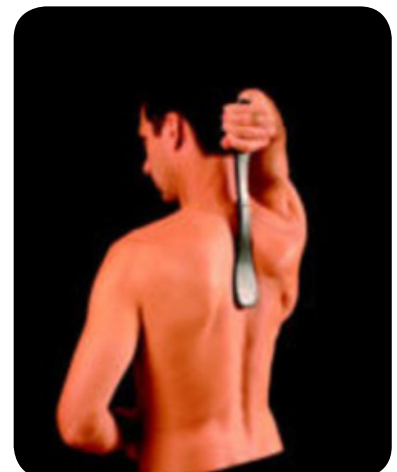
Hair care

- Flip-top or pump-action shampoo and conditioner bottles may be a helpful alternative to screw top bottles.
- A portable stand holds a hairdryer steady for one-handed styling or drying.



Medication management

- Pill splitters, some with magnification, can be used one-handed. They trap both halves of the pill within the device. Some splitters will also crush pills.
- Long handled aids assist in applying creams and lotions.



Dental care

- Dentures can be cleaned one-handed when the denture brush is on suction cups.
- A toothpaste tube squeezer attached to the wall enables a person to dispense toothpaste with one hand.

Tips:

- Hold the toothbrush handle in your mouth then put toothpaste onto it with the unaffected hand.
- Alternatively, put toothbrush on a hard surface with the bristles pointing up, then put toothpaste onto it. You could use your affected hand or forearm to stabilise your toothbrush while applying toothpaste with your other hand.
- An electric toothbrush reduces the amount of dexterity needed for brushing teeth.
- Flip-top lids or pump-action toothpaste dispensers may be easier than screw tops.



Nail care

- Nail clippers can be attached to a board fixed to a firm surface and the nail file swiveled out for one-handed use. Nail clippers are also available on suction cups.
- Consider going to a podiatrist or manicurist, particularly if you have a medical condition such as diabetes, and are at risk of developing an infection if you cut your skin.

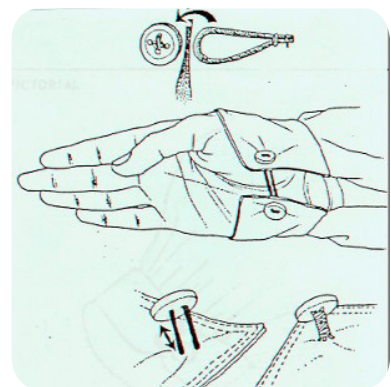


Dressing

If dressing is difficult, it may be helpful to try making adaptations to clothing using assistive devices, or using different ways of dressing to help you to dress and undress independently. Thoughtful selection of clothes may also lessen your difficulties.

Adapted clothing

- Skirts and trousers with elastic waistbands are easier to manage than those with fasteners.
- Clothing without fasteners, like T-shirts, eliminates the need to deal with buttons or zips.
- If fasteners are necessary, hook and loop fastenings such as Velcro are often easier to manage. A pair of trousers, for example, may have the appearance of a fly at the front, but the actual method of opening might be a Velcro fastening at the sides.
- To maintain the appearance of a buttoned shirt, buttons can be sewn on top of the sewn-up buttonholes and then Velcro used underneath to actually fasten the shirt.
- Two buttons can also be sewn together with elastic to make expanding cuff links.
- Clothing that splits open at the back may be easier to manage for toileting.
- Some companies specialise in manufacturing adapted clothing, or can modify existing items on request.



Assistive dressing aids

Doing up buttons

A button hook can be used to do up buttons by pushing the hook through the buttonhole, looping it over the button and pulling it back through the hole. Button hooks for a variety of button sizes are available.



Using dressing sticks

A dressing stick usually features a hook at one end and sometimes a thimble on the other end. It has a range of uses including pushing sleeves off shoulders and pulling up pants. Loops can be sewn onto clothing and the dressing stick used to hook into the loops to pull up and position the garment.



Zip options

- Large rings or tape can be attached to the zip to assist grasp.
- A dressing stick can be used to hook into zip rings that are difficult to reach.
- Another option is to replace the zip with a Velcro fastening.



Pulling on socks and compression stockings

- The sock notch is designed to assist people who have difficulty reaching their feet or have the use of only one hand to put on socks or stockings. It has a notch cut out at the lower end which hooks the sock when first putting it on the aid, making it less likely to accidentally slip off. The attached tapes / cord are used to pull the sock aid over the feet. There are styles for socks, stockings and for people with larger feet.
- A compression stocking can be particularly difficult to apply because of the strong elasticity of the stocking. A variety of compression stocking aids are available to assist with putting on and removing compression stockings, including options for both open toe and closed toe stockings. There is a plastic stocking aid designed to assist with donning compression stockings. It may be useful if you have limited finger movement. It has a





grooved design to prevent the compression stocking from popping off. It may be possible for some people with limited use of one hand to use these products independently but others may still require assistance.

- There are also aids to assist with the removal of compression stockings, socks and pantyhose. One end of a dressing stick is designed to assist with this task.

Tips:

- Wear rubber gloves to improve grip and avoid piercing the compression stockings.
- Use a footstool with a slip-resistant mat on it to bring your foot within reach.
- You may be able to remove a sock by sliding your foot across carpet but take care that you do not damage the skin under your foot if trying this method.

Solutions for shoes

- Long-handled shoehorns may assist with putting on shoes and eliminate the need to bend down.
- If shoelace tying is difficult, elastic shoelaces or coil (spring) laces enable some shoes to be slipped on and off without tying and untying.
- A cord-and-barrel lock can be used as a lace securing and tightening device.
- Plastic shoe buttons screw through the top pair of eyelets in a lace-up shoe. A tied shoelace can then be pulled over the button to fasten, reducing the number of times the shoelace has to be tied and untied.
- Ortholace is a Velcro attachment which can be applied to lace-up shoes. It allows one-handed adjustment of laces by pulling across the Velcro mechanism to tighten up the laces and the shoe.





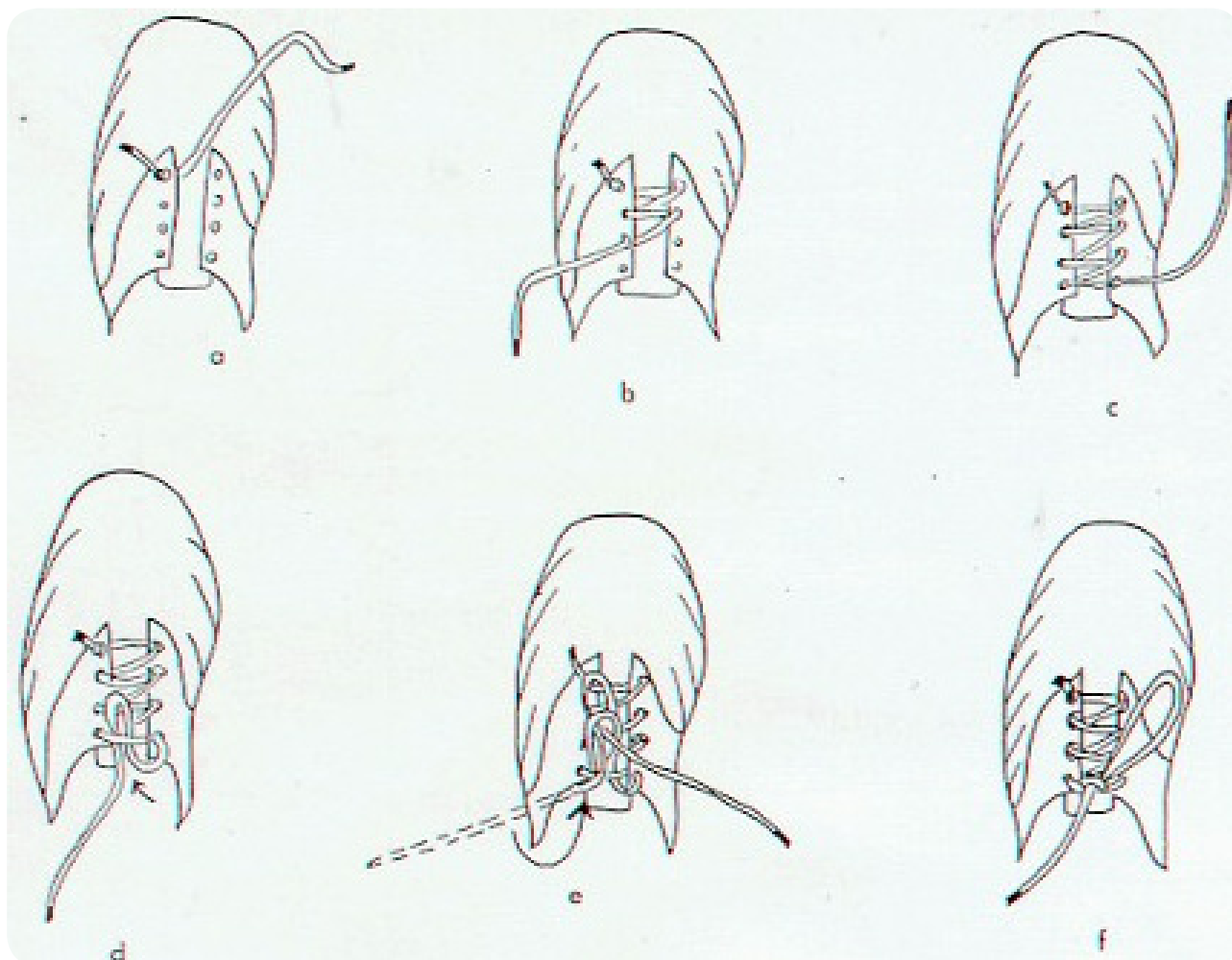
- To assist with removing boots or shoes a boot jack might be of assistance. It features a curved cut out area at one end to accommodate the heel of the shoe or boot while the other foot is placed on the other end to hold it stable, while the boot is pulled off. It is important to have good balance to use this device safely.
- If putting slippers on is difficult, there are medical sheepskin slippers available with a wide opening tongue that fastens with Velcro. Some designs open up to be totally flat and then fasten around the heel and across the top of the foot with a wide Velcro strip. Some feature a rubber slip-resistant sole.

Tips:

- Customised shoes can be made with easier-to-manage fasteners and are designed to open more fully to assist with placing the foot into the shoe.
- Another easy option is to consider slip-on shoes or those that fasten with Velcro. Check that these types of shoes provide adequate foot support and, if necessary, will accommodate orthotic inserts.



Dressing techniques – Step-by-step methods



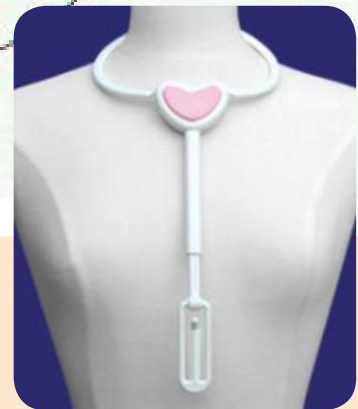
One-handed method of shoe lacing

- Knot the end of an ordinary shoelace and thread it through the eyelet nearest the toe-end of the shoe.
- Thread the lace down through eyelets as shown, finishing on the side opposite to the knotted end.
- Make a loop in the loose end of the lace and pass it under the first lacing.
- Make a second loop and pass it over the first lacing, through the first loop.
- Tighten this half-bow to secure the lace.

One-handed method of putting on a bra

- Fasten the bra at the front of your body and then turn the bra around. It may be helpful to peg one end of the bra to your pants to hold it while joining it to the other end.
- Insert your affected arm through the shoulder strap which is pulled up towards your shoulder.
- Then pull the other shoulder strap up onto your shoulder of that side.
- Finally, pull the strap all the way up onto the shoulder of your affected arm.

An aid is available which aims to assist with putting on a bra one-handed. It secures one side of the bra at the front while the other side of the bra is attached to it.



Tips:

- If a bra is very difficult to fasten at the back, consider purchasing a front-opening bra.
- If the hook and eye fastenings are too small and difficult to manage, a bra can be altered to have a front opening where Velcro is threaded through a D-ring and pulled back on itself.
- Another option is to purchase a 'fastener-free bra' which involves pulling the bra over the head or stepping into it and pulling it up into position.

One-handed method of putting on shirt/blouse/cardigan

- It is easier to draw the sleeve onto your affected arm first, and then pull the garment up onto your shoulder, having the bulk of the sleeve pulled up past your elbow. Your other arm is then inserted into its sleeve.
- To remove the garment, slip it off your affected shoulder first, then off your other shoulder, and work the sleeve off your other arm. Then slide the garment off your affected arm.

One-handed method of putting on a heavy coat

This is useful for those with painful or stiff shoulders. The extra weight of an overcoat increases the difficulty of putting it on.

- To support the weight, drape the coat over the back of an upright chair so that the armholes face forward.
- Lower your affected arm into the armhole, pull the coat well up over that shoulder and sit down on the chair, easing your other arm in at the same time.

One-handed method of putting on a jumper

- Place the garment front down with the neck-opening facing away from your body.
- Pick up the garment at the hem using your unaffected hand while supporting your affected arm on a table or chair arm.
- Place your affected arm in the sleeve, pull it on and adjust it.
- Gather the body of the garment up to neck and pull it over your head.
- Place your unaffected arm in the sleeve.



One-handed method of removing a jumper

- Bring the collar of the garment above your nose, and hold the garment at the back of the neck-opening.
- Bring the garment over the back of your head and bend your neck.
- Gather up the body of the garment at the back and pull it over your head.
- Ease the sleeve off your unaffected arm first, using your body.
- Remove your affected arm from the garment.



One-handed method of putting on trousers

- Sit on the edge of the bed.
- Cross your affected leg over your unaffected one and pull the trouser leg onto your affected leg.
- Proceed in the same manner for the other leg.
- Lie down and pull up the trousers over your hips while rolling from side to side or arching your back and lifting your bottom off the bed.

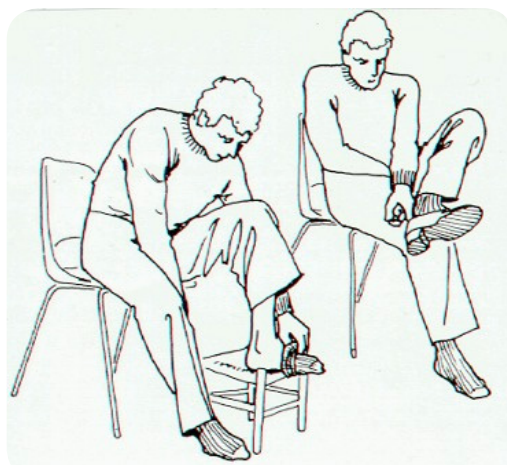
Some people can stand up instead of sitting, and lean with their affected side against a supportive object.

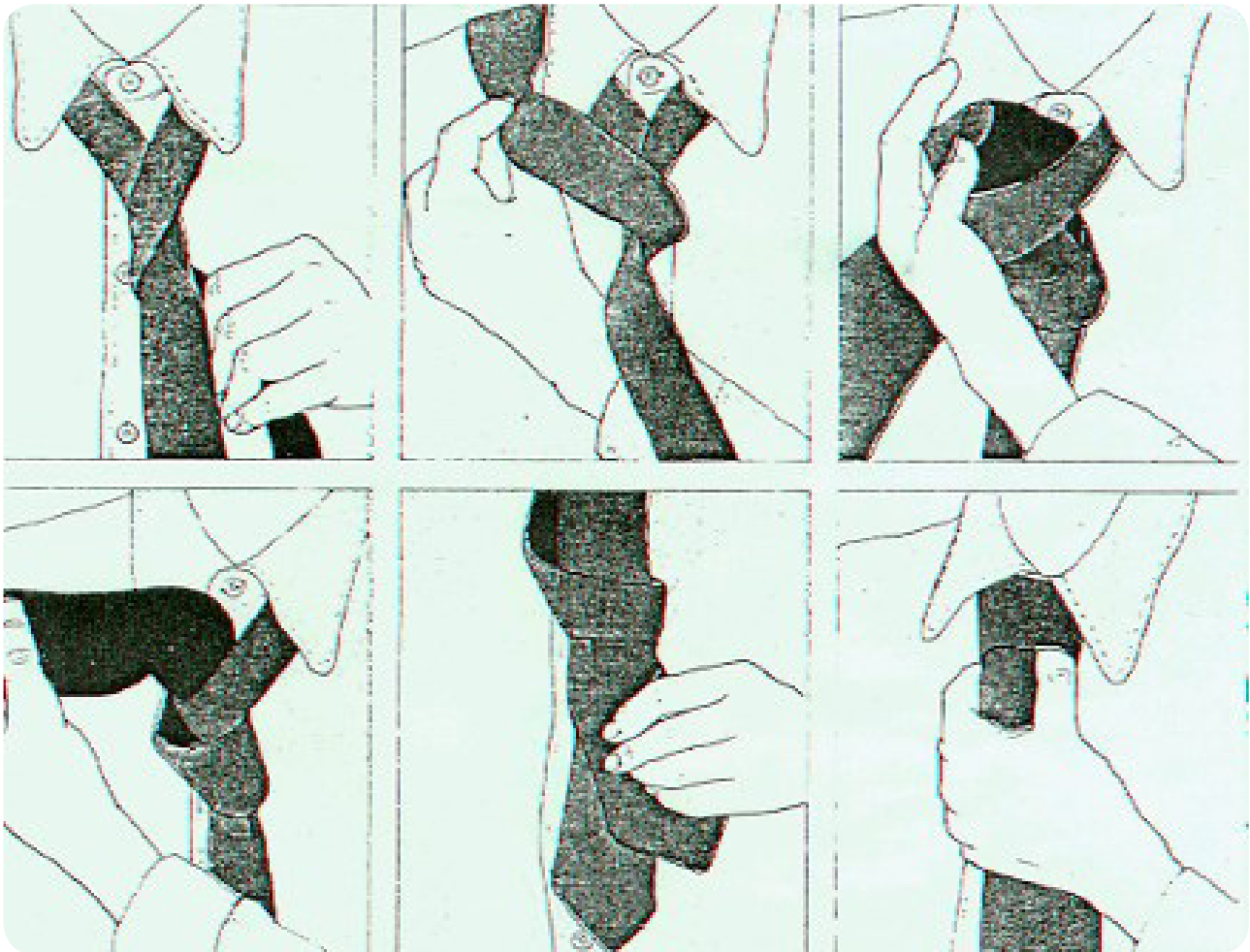
- The trousers are then pulled up over your hips and the waistband fastened.
- After going to the toilet, the trousers are drawn up on the affected side and support is taken against a nearby wall, or a rail. Then the trousers are pulled up on the other side and fastened.

One-handed method of putting on socks and knee-high stockings

- Support your affected leg on your opposite knee.
- Place the sock onto your lap and gather it up as far as possible with your thumb inside it.
- Place the sock on your foot and bring it up the leg, pulling alternately on the sides or at the back, and smoothing it with the palm of your hand and your fingers. Looser-style socks may be easier to pull up.
- Repeat for the other sock.

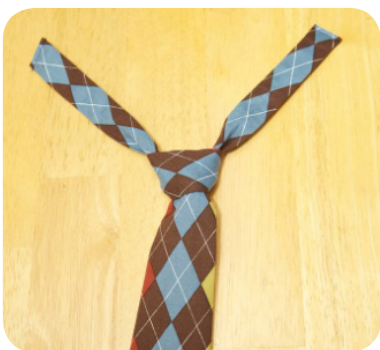
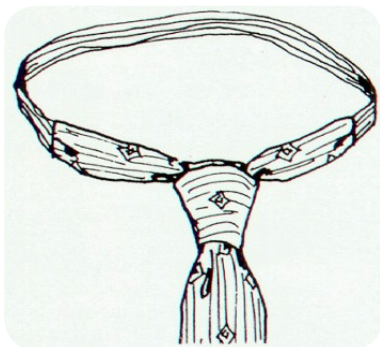
To reduce the amount of bending, rest your foot on a stool as the sock is put on.





One-handed method of tying a tie

- To knot a tie with one hand, first secure the tie under the shirt collar with one end hanging longer than the other. You can secure the narrow end by tucking it into the top of your trousers.
- Cross the longer end over the other once, then do this again. Take the shorter end and tuck it under, and then bring it through the large loop.
- Insert the end down through the newly formed knot. Pull down firmly on the end to tighten the knot. Raise the knot by holding the back end with your last three fingers and slowly move the knot upwards with your thumb and forefinger.
- Then hold both ends firmly and use your thumb to push the knot into place.



Tie adaptations

Pre-tying: The tie is tied by a helper and left loose so that it can be slipped on over the head and tightened by the wearer. It can be removed in the reverse order.

For someone with limited grasp, stitching a loop to the narrow end of a tie provides a place to hold when putting on a tie.

Tie with Velcro fastening at back of neck: A tie can be cut at the back of the neck, the edges neatened and a Velcro fastening made. The tie is first put on and knotted, after which it can then be put on and off using the Velcro fastening.

Tie with Velcro attachments under collar: The tie is tied in the normal way. It is then cut 50 mm on either side of the knot and the ends are stitched. A dab of Velcro hook is sewn to the underneath of each end to fasten to corresponding pieces of Velcro loop which are sewn to each side of the shirt opening, underneath the collar.

Tie on elastic: The tie is tied and cut on either side of the knot and a length of elastic is sewn to each cut end, forming a loop which can be pulled over the head with one hand.

General tips for dressing:

- Sitting whilst dressing is safer and easier than dressing whilst standing.
- Dress your affected arm first, and undress it last.
- Use braces or loops to help stabilise trousers and hold them steady. While sitting, insert your feet, affected leg first, and bring the trousers up as far as your thighs. Then, from a standing position, bend and bring the trousers up to your waist, using the loops or braces to keep the garment steady. Poor balance can be helped by leaning against a wall.
- Fasten clothing whilst sitting or standing, using your affected arm as an anchor to hold the garment against your body while you join the two sides of the fastening.



In the kitchen

Food preparation

Stabilising

- It is important to stabilise equipment such as boards or bowls before commencing meal preparation tasks. This can be achieved by placing the item on slip-resistant matting or a wet cloth.
- A bowl stabiliser is made from slip-resistant and heat-resistant silicone plastic. The suction base will hold onto a flat surface and the upper surface will hold a bowl or plate. This helps to keep the bowl or plate steady.
- A stove top saucepan stabiliser stops the saucepan rotating on the stove whilst the contents are being stirred. Flexible plastic wires on suction cups fit around the handle to keep it still and prevent the saucepan from moving.



Tips:

- A board with a round cut-out hole can also be used to stabilise bowls. A wide-base bowl with a rubber base, or a heavier bowl, is more stable for stirring.
- Placing objects such as hard-boiled eggs onto a wet cloth placed in the sink plug-hole may help to stabilise them for peeling.
- You can stabilise a saucepan by placing the handle between two cans containing food such as beans.

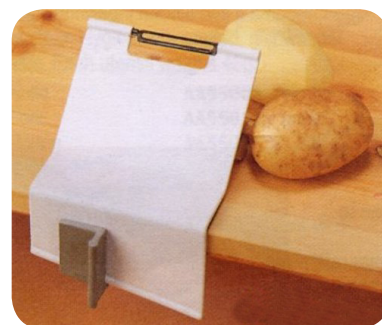


Cutting, slicing, grating, peeling and spreading

- A chopping board with spikes can be used to secure foods such as fruit, vegetables and meat for chopping, peeling, cutting, grating and slicing. A piece of waxed paper or paper towel pushed down over the spikes before preparing the food will make cleaning up easier.
- There is a chopping board with a knife attached at the knife's tip that pivots to make chopping easier. The board may also have spikes. This type of aid could be home-made using suitable materials.
- Some chopping boards have attached clamps or vices that can hold food or other items in place.
- Manual choppers and automatic food processors can be used to chop food.
- Boards are available with graters and peelers attached, allowing one-handed use.
- A vegetable peeler that clamps to the bench enables one-handed peeling.
- When buttering bread, use a board with raised edges at one corner. These create a barrier which enables you to spread butter and other toppings by moving the knife blade towards the raised edge.

Tips:

- Electric knives can make it easier to cut food, for example when cutting bread or carving roasts.
- Many foods that have minimal requirements for preparation are now available. Check your local supermarket for frozen peeled and sliced vegetables, crushed garlic and diced meats.



Opening containers

Opening Jars

There are several aids that stabilise jars and bottles, leaving one hand free to open them. Jars that have a vacuum seal will be easier to open if the vacuum is released before you open the jar.

- A jar key opener is used to open a jar with a vacuum freshness seal. It releases the vacuum seal and the lid is then easier to turn. This opener may need to be used in conjunction with a clamp or other stabilising device for one-handed use.
- A plastic container with three sunken cones of different sizes sits on a table top. The cones are lined with slip-resistant rubber which helps to secure bottles and jars whilst they are opened with one hand.
- A clamp can be used on a bench to stabilise jars or bottles. It consists of a moulded plastic base with a lip which hangs over the edge of the bench. Use your body to push a sliding ram to secure the jar or bottle against a V-shape wall. The jar or bottle can be opened with one hand.
- A V-shape jar opener that attaches to the underside of an overhead cupboard or shelf can allow varying sizes of jars and bottles to be opened with one hand.
- A cordless automatic jar opener, which can be powered electrically or by batteries, can be mounted under a cabinet or shelf. It requires upward pressure to activate the motor.
- A battery-operated, automatic jar opener stabilises the jar while turning the lid. It consists of an upper compartment with two sets of adjustable jaws underneath. The outer jaws adjust to hold the side of the jar and inner jaws adjust to hold the lid. When the start button is pushed, the outer jaws hold the jar still, while the inner jaws rotate to loosen the lid.





Opening Cans

- There is a manual can opener which consists of a wall-mounted bracket, a rotary handle opener and an adjustable stand. The stand is wound to the height of the cutting wheel. The top is removed by turning the handle.
- A small metal can opener with a large plastic turning handle can be operated with one hand when the can is stabilised using your affected hand or a clamping device.
- A hand-held manual can opener which can be used with one hand operates with a ratchet-style system that allows the can to be opened. It has two large handles with a hardened steel blade and magnet to hold the lid. There is a push button to release the handle. It is suitable for left and right-handed use.
- Electric handheld can openers, and cordless handheld can openers with rechargeable batteries, for right-handed use, are also available.
- Free-standing electric can openers are available from electrical appliance stores. Consider the amount of dexterity and strength required to use the appliance, the height of the appliance, the width of the lever arm, the force required to puncture the can and whether the lever stays down automatically once depressed.
- A battery-operated can opener which can be placed onto a can and moves automatically around the top is suitable for right and left-handed use. It does not need to be held while it is operating.

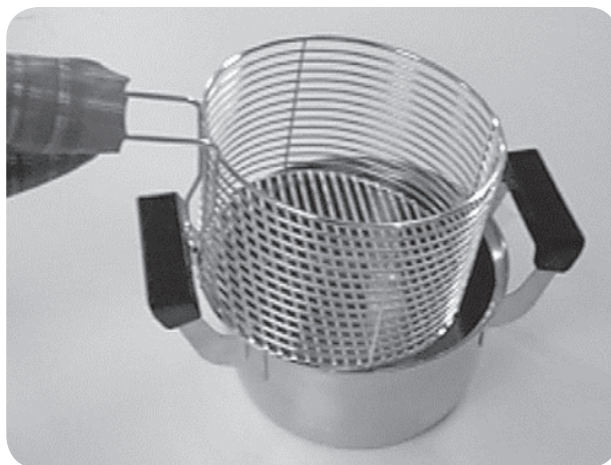


Tips:

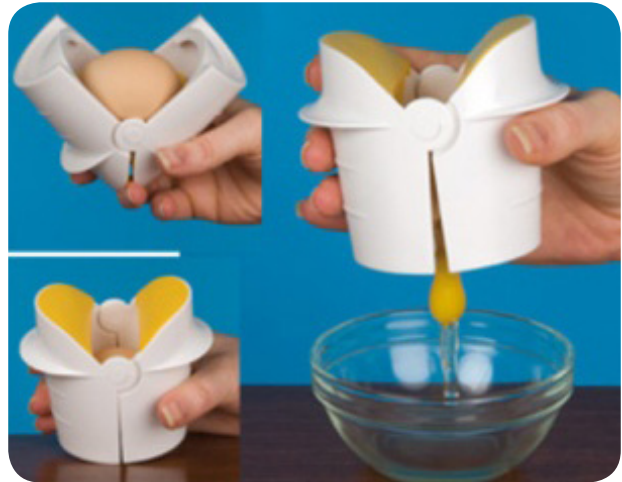
- Scissors may be used to open cartons. Left-handed scissors are available.
- You can stabilise some packages between your knees while sitting but take care that liquids do not spurt out when tops are removed.
- Rubber washing-up gloves, a damp tea-towel or a piece of slip-resistant matting can provide grip for opening jars.
- To loosen the top of a jar, try running hot water over the lid. Then gently tap around the top of the lid with a spoon to loosen the seal.
- A bottle opener can sometimes be used to break the seal.
- Use containers with easy-to-remove lids.
- Try sitting a jar or container in the top cutlery drawer, holding the drawer closed with your hip while turning the lid. Wrap a damp dish cloth around the jar to provide more friction and prevent breakage.

More hints for making cooking easier

- Use a mesh basket in a saucepan to eliminate the need to lift it for draining vegetables. After the vegetables have been removed, turn the hot-plate off and leave the saucepan on it to cool down before washing it. Use a small jug to transport cooled water from the pan to the sink until the saucepan is light enough to lift.
- Make sure you have a surface close to the oven and fridge to place items onto.
- If heavy saucepans are troublesome, consider using a microwave oven or devices such as rice cookers, steamers and crock pots.
- Ladle or spoon hot foods from a saucepan rather than lifting the pan for draining if it is heavy.
- Try using tongs, rather than a fork, for lifting, turning and transferring food.
- Slide objects, rather than lift them, onto the kitchen bench.



- To crack eggs you can use an egg cracker designed for one-handed use.
- A pepper grinder with squeeze-action handles can be used with one hand.
- Gas gun lighters may be used to light gas stoves which do not have auto-ignition.
- A wooden rolling pin attached to a single wooden handle, designed to be used with one hand, enables you to roll pastry. This may have to be home-made.
- If taking an opened can of food containing liquid across the kitchen, place the can in a bowl or pan to carry it to avoid spills on the floor.
- If filling large saucepans with water is difficult, use a small jug to transport water from the tap to a saucepan already positioned on the stove.
- A plastic hoop can be used to make a kitchen or cleaning apron which can be put on and taken off with one hand.
- An electrical appliance, such as a hand held mixer, may be fitted with a safety switch which is intended to prevent the appliance from being started by mistake. It turns off immediately when pressure on the switch is released. Check that you will be able to hold the switch on while you are using the appliance.





Meal time

Cutlery

- Cutlery with built-up handles can be easier to hold and may enable a person with some strength in their affected hand to eat using both hands. Handles of standard cutlery can be enlarged with foam tubing.
- Angled spoons, or knife and fork combinations such as splayds, can make it easier to eat with one hand. To make your own angled cutlery, you can bend some cutlery with handles to the angle required.
- People with limited or no grasp can manipulate cutlery using a 'palmar cuff orthosis'. A strap can be placed around the hand to assist with grasping. Some straps have a pocket in the palmar section so that the cutlery can be inserted and removed easily from the hand or limb.
- Rocker knives make it easier to cut food by using a rocking, rather than a sawing motion.



Crockery

- Clip-on plate guards which can be added to most plates provide an edge to push food against. This may help to prevent food from spilling over the edge of a plate.
- Some plates have rims, or a raised lip at one end, and some also have a central spoon channel. These plates enable a person with the use of one hand to push food against a barrier to get it onto their fork or spoon.
- Slip-resistant mats placed under plates and bowls helps to keep them still when you are eating. Some plates have a suction base.



Pouring

- A kettle tipper which pivots on a frame holds a jug or kettle to assist with pouring into a cup. Models for both corded and cordless kettles are available.
- A rapid-boil appliance heats a cup of water quickly and allows one-handed operation by pressing a button.



Moving things around

- Rather than carrying shopping in your hands, use a wheeled cart, back pack or bag on a strap across your body.
- In the kitchen use a trolley or one-handed tray. Make sure you have a heat-resistant surface under hot items.



Other household tasks

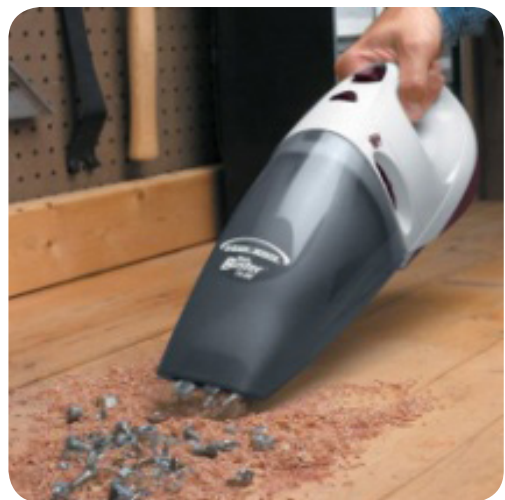
Washing up

- A suction bottle brush or a washing up brush with suction cups can be fixed in or near the kitchen sink.



Cleaning and laundry

- When buying a vacuum cleaner, look for a lightweight model that is easy to operate with one hand. They may be battery operated.
- To pick up crumbs after sweeping, you may find it easy to use a long handle dustpan and broom. Some dustpans will stay upright without being held, while you sweep into them with one hand. You could use a damp cloth instead, or use a hand held vacuum cleaner.
- There is a pegless clothesline consisting of sections which can be clipped together to customise the length. Clothes are slid into position. This clothesline can be added to a rotary clothesline or other clothesline frames, verandahs, in the laundry, or whilst camping. It can be used with one hand.
- Use a laundry trolley to carry washing to the clothesline.



Tips:

- If the clothesline is variable-height it can be lowered while washing is thrown over it and pegged, then raised.
- You may find it easier to hang smaller items on a portable folding clothes airer than to hang them on a clothes line.
- A wall or cupboard-mounted ironing board that folds down for use is easy to set up and pack away.
- Consider whether a front-loading or top-loading washing machine will be easier for you to load and unload with one hand.
- It may be easier to load and unload a front-loading washing machine if it is elevated on a stand.
- Some commercially available push-on pegs may be easier for some people to use than spring-style pegs.
- If it not possible to hang washing, it may be necessary to use a clothes dryer.



Bed making

- A bed with a doona is often easier to make than one made up with blankets. Placing a sheet under the doona keeps it fresher and minimises the need to change the doona cover. Consider, however, how much additional effort will be required to make a bed with a sheet in place.

Mobility

Getting about

- It is possible for a four-wheel seat walker to be adapted for one-handed use.
- There are manual wheelchairs that can be propelled with one hand. Some have a double rim on one wheel and others are lever-operated. They are available for right and left-handed use.
- There are manual wheelchairs that have a lower than usual floor to seat height to enable people to use one foot to propel themselves, in addition to using one arm.
- Some motorised scooters are suitable for one-handed use. Powered wheelchairs are designed to be driven one-handed. Controls can be mounted for use by either hand on both scooters and powered wheelchairs.



Turning in bed

- You may be assisted with getting in and out of bed by using a bedstick. A bedstick should be prescribed and fitted by a health professional to ensure that its use does not present a danger for someone who may be at risk of injury because of confusion or impaired mobility.
- A slide sheet folded in half or formed into a tube can assist you to turn over independently. One layer of the material slides against the other, reducing the amount of effort required for turning.



Communication

Telephone use

- Various brands of hands-free cordless phones, and corded phones with speaker function, are available from phone retailers.
- Using a headset means that you do not need to hold the receiver.
- Put a slip-resistant mat under the telephone to stop it moving.



Services for people with disabilities:

- Telstra customers whose disability causes difficulty holding a telephone handset may be eligible for a hands-free phone under the Telstra Disability Equipment Program. FREECALL **1800 068 424** to enquire about this Telstra service.
- Optus customers can find information on the Optus website <http://www.optus.com.au> about the disability services available from this telecommunications provider.

Computer use

- Equipment includes keyboards designed for one-handed use, with layouts suitable for right or left-handed use.
- It may be possible to change the layout of a standard keyboard.
- There is software for learning to type on a keyboard with one hand.
- Speech recognition software lets you type by talking to your computer. This software allows you to activate typing and mouse functions without using your hands.
- Word prediction software can increase your speed of writing text and cut down on the number of keystrokes and switch activations required. It can also reduce the amount of energy required.



Find out more about computer equipment and software:

- Contact ILC Tas **1300 885 886** for information and advice.



Writing

- Use a paper weight or heavy object to hold paper in place or use a spring clipboard.
- Try using a tear-off lecture pad.
- You may be able to use your affected arm to stabilise the paper while you write with your other hand.

Tip:

- You may benefit from consultation with an occupational therapist if you need to learn to write with your non-dominant hand.

Recreation

Sewing, knitting, craft and hobbies

- For people who enjoy craft activities there are aids to assist with needlework, knitting and crocheting.
- A knitting belt is a device used to hold a knitting needle or crochet hook to enable one-handed use. The knitting aid that consists of a leather pocket filled with fibre, with holes to hold a knitting needle in multiple positions. The belt is fastened around the waist.
- A magnetic section on the head of a hammer assists with picking up and positioning a nail.



Tip:

- Use self-threading needles or needle threaders available from sewing shops.
- Put the needle into a pincushion to hold it whilst you thread it.



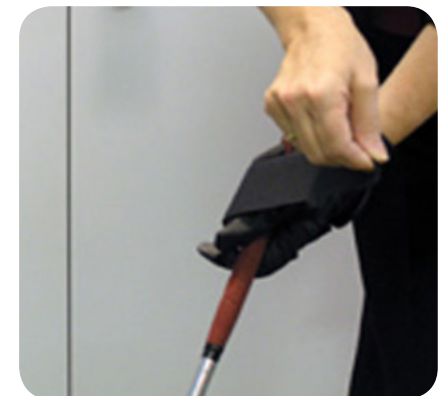
Sports

Adapted equipment assists fishing enthusiasts, billiard players, lawn bowlers and golfers.

- A harness with adjustable shoulder and waist straps, and a cylindrical pipe-like attachment at the front, holds a fishing rod. This allows the wearer to operate the rod with one hand.
- A pool or billiard cue can be inserted into a control guide that helps to stabilise and position the cue to allow the player to shoot with one arm.
- A long-handled bowling device enables the user to pick up, carry and deliver a bowl or jack, without bending. It is available with palm or thumb operated release and can be used with one hand. (The bowling arm shown is approved by Bowls Australia for all levels of competition. Permission may need to be obtained for official games. You may also need to provide a medical certificate.)
- A golf glove which has a Velcro fastening assists a person to hold a golf club.

Tip:

- Sports associations for people with disabilities may be able to recommend equipment for active exercise such as cycling.





Card Games

- Commercially-made card holders are available.
- A card holder can be home-made. Two cardboard drink coasters, or plastic lids, are held together with a split-ended paper holder which is pushed through the centre of both of the coasters or lids.
- Use an up-ended scrubbing brush to hold the cards.



Reading Books

- Some bookrests have small posts which keep a book open and allow easy page-turning.
- A small plastic device with a thumb slot and rest and two elongated sides (wings) is placed into the spine of a book. The two wings are used to hold the book open with one hand.
- A variety of folding supports can be used to prop up electronic devices.



Tip:

- Sit at a table with the book open on a table, use a book rest, have a tray on your knee and hold the book open on the tray, or use an electronic reading device to read eBooks.



Gardening

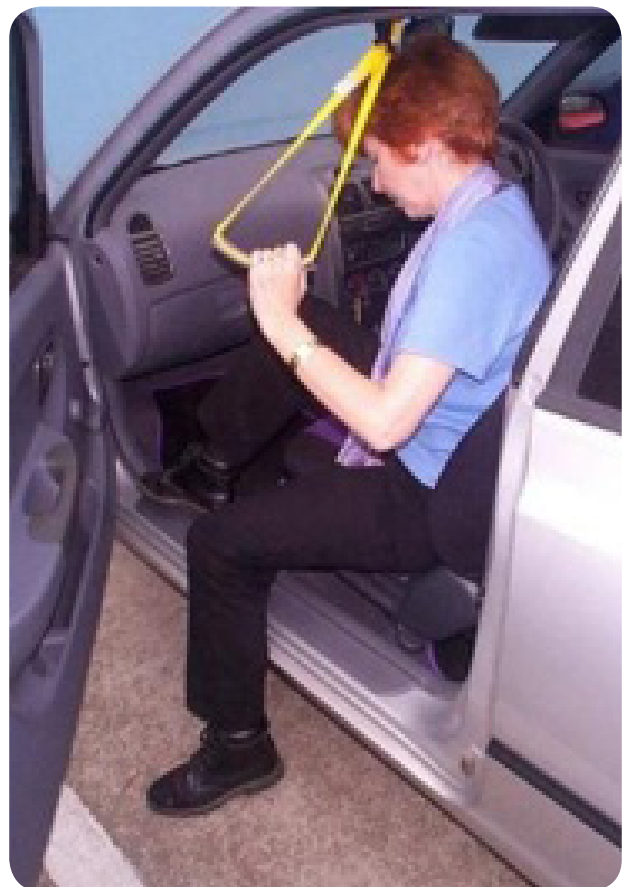
- Use a utility cart in the garden to carry tools and garden refuse.
- Some garden shears are lightweight and can be operated with one hand. The blades rotate 180 degrees to suit left or right-handed users. Blades can be set to cut vertically or horizontally.
- There is a range of hand secateurs designed for use by left-handed gardeners. Spring-opening handles and ratchet mechanisms are beneficial for people with reduced strength. You should ensure that your hand span (how far apart you can stretch your fingers) is large enough for you to be able to operate these types of secateurs.



Tip:

- A British national gardening charity website, with information and advice about gardening when you use one hand, is included in the list of useful resources at the end of this publication. Topics: getting ready to garden, digging, weeding, lawn mowing, pruning, trimming, sweeping and raking, watering, sowing seeds, planting out, growing in containers, tips on garden design, advice about selecting tools.





Vehicle adaptations and access

Getting in and out of a car can be difficult if you have lost the use of one hand and have associated physical limitations because of your medical condition. Equipment which may assist you includes:

- Car seat swivel adaptations where the entire seat swivels and slides out from the car.
- Portable swivel cushions which are placed on the car seat and help you to rotate your body and swing your legs into the car.
- A strap which hangs from the door frame and may assist you if you have limited reach. Consider whether pulling on the strap would put strain on your shoulders.
- A removable lever which fits into the door lock striker and provides a rigid handle to lean on.



Driving

ILC Tas has information about driver assessment and training, and procedures for obtaining modified driving controls, such as spinner knobs and an adapted accelerator, which may make driving safer and easier for a person with limited use of one hand.

Useful resources

Internet – there are numerous websites related to managing activities with one hand, including:

<http://ilcaustralia.org.au> – browse online database for product information

www.aboutonehandtyping.com – styles, methods, keyboards, instructions for one-handed typing

www.amputee-online.com – general information and links to other amputee related sites

www.carryongardening.org.uk – a British charity website which provides information and advice about gardening when you use one hand

loricase.com/tips4arm-amps – step-by-step photographic instructions

www.stroke4carers.org – video clips showing demonstrations of activities including dressing, bathing and showering

www.youtube.com – videos showing people demonstrating techniques for managing many activities

Book –

One-Handed in a Two-Handed World, 3rd edition, Tommye-K Mayer, 2007 – a book written by the author after a stroke. Topics include dressing, personal hygiene, eating, cooking, travelling, office work, sports and household chores.

Useful contacts

Independent Living Centre Tasmania –
Tel 1300 885 886

Cerebral Palsy Tasmania – Tel (03) 6228 4488

National Stroke Foundation –
Tel 1800 STROKE (787 653)

Parkinson's Tasmania – Tel (03) 6229 2509

Tasmanian Amputee Society Inc –
Tel (03) 6344 6542

TADTAS - Technical Aid to the Disabled (Tasmania)
– Tel ILC Tas 1300 885 886 for contact information.
TAD is a non-profit organisation comprising volunteers who design and construct aids for people with disabilities, where a suitable product is not available. TAD provides information about non-commercial aids and technical advice to people with disabilities. TAD does not charge for labour.

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Eating and drinking equipment, Information Sheet, LifeTec Queensland, March 2009

One handed aids, ILC Contact, ILC Tas, Winter 2004

One handed in the kitchen, @ a glance information sheet, ILC NSW, 2012

One-handed techniques, Occupational Therapy and Stroke, Second Edition. 2010

National Assistive Technology Online Resource Website, Independent Living Centres Australia

Single handed equipment, Information Sheet, LifeTec Queensland, March 2009

Stroke: equipment to assist with daily living, Information sheet, Disability Services, Government of South Australia, August 2012

Contact ILC Tas for more information



Ring **1300 885 886** to speak to a health professional



Visit our website **www.ilctas.asn.au**, look for products on the ILC Australia Online Resource Website **www.ilcaustralia.org.au** or email us at **ilc@ilctas.asn.au**



Make an appointment to visit our centre at **275 Wellington Street, South Launceston**



Ring us to find out when we will be visiting your area

