

Getting Dressed

Getting dressed involves balance, coordination, planning and fine motor control. With Parkinson's, changes such as slower movement, stiffness or fatigue can make these tasks take longer or require more effort. Some parts of dressing, like putting on socks, fastening buttons or choosing clothes, may require more time, concentration or support.

This chapter shares practical strategies and tools to help make dressing easier, reduce frustration and lower the risk of falls.

Dressing self-check

The list below highlights challenges that may develop or become more noticeable as Parkinson's symptoms change over time. Use it to help identify strategies in this chapter and guide conversations with your care team.



Check off any that apply to you:



Buttons, zippers or other fasteners are hard to manage



Trouble bending or reaching to put on socks, pants or shoes



Dressing takes much longer than it used to



Difficulty choosing or organizing clothing



Fatigue makes dressing harder



Feeling unsteady when dressing or needing to sit down



Dizziness, falls or near falls when getting dressed

What other challenges have you noticed?

Top Tips for Easier Dressing

Use these tips as a guide and adjust based on your needs.



Plan ahead

Lay out clothes the night before or hang outfits in the closet



Build strength

A physical therapist can help strengthen core and leg muscles



Dress when you have more energy

Usually after your morning dose has taken effect



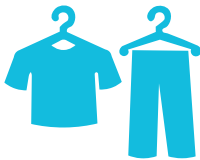
Warm up first

Light movement or stretching can help you feel more flexible



Consider sitting to dress

Helps with balance and reduces fatigue



Keep clothes within easy reach

Store everyday clothes on lower shelves or hang them where they are easy to reach

Care Partner Tip

If you are giving more hands-on dressing assistance, it can be physically demanding. An occupational therapist can show you ways to protect your body.

Dressing Tools

Sometimes a tool can make dressing faster or easier. Other times, simplifying clothing may be the best approach. Use what works for you. An occupational therapist can help you find the right tools or clothing for you.

Using a chair as a dressing tool

A sturdy chair with armrests can be helpful during dressing, especially if:

- A little extra support is helpful while standing
- Sitting feels safer when feeling tired, dizzy or off balance
- Lifting a foot to put on socks, pants or shoes is easier while seated
- A short rest during dressing is needed

Avoid

Sitting on the edge of a bed to get dressed. Beds are soft and can shift, which may make balance harder.

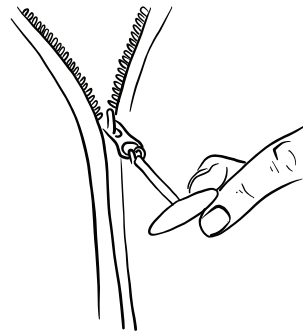
Long-handled shoehorns

Help you slide into shoes without bending forward



Zipper pulls

Add a larger loop or handle to a zipper to make it easier to grip



Care Partner Tip

Clothing choices often reflect personal style. If you're helping pick out outfits, look for options that are easier to put on and still feel like something the person would normally wear.

Easier Clothing Options

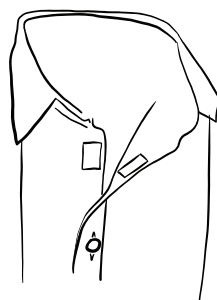
Front-opening shirts

Shirts that open in front are often easier to manage than pullovers



Simple closures

Magnetic closures, Velcro or elastic waistbands can replace small buttons or zipper pulls



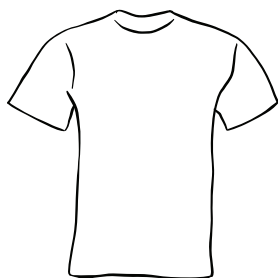
Roomy, soft clothing

Loose necklines and pant legs are easier to get into and move in



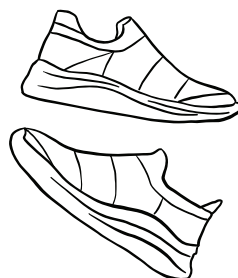
Stretchy fabric

Clothing with stretch can be easier to pull on and adjust



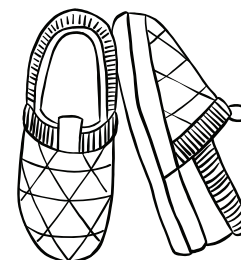
No-tie footwear

Slip-on styles or no-tie laces can make it quicker to get shoes on and head out the door



Slippers with backs

Stay on better than open-back slippers and may help prevent trips or falls



Helpful Resources

Learn more about dressing and clothing adaptations at [Parkinson.org/Dressing](https://www.parkinson.org/Dressing).

Watch CareMAP video on dressing for practical tools and tips designed for care partners at [Parkinson.org/CareMAP](https://www.parkinson.org/CareMAP).