How Adaptive Clothing for MS Can Make Your Life Easier

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Choosing MS-Friendly Clothes

Getting ready for your day can be a big chore when you're living with MS, but fortunately more designers are taking your needs to heart. Adaptive clothing for MS makes use of clever cuts and fastening systems for pieces that are easy to get on and comfortable to wear all day.

Instead of settling for big ponchos or boxy outfits, celebrate your style and boost your self-image with beautifully tailored clothes that won't challenge your strength, sturdiness or range of motion.

Choosing Clothing to Suit MS Symptoms

You might be tempted to struggle through the same tasks as you've always done, but you can save a lot of time and effort by working with your fatigue, weakness, lack of balance or muscle rigidity rather than against those symptoms. Look out for adaptive clothing with some MS-friendly design elements, like:

- **Cowl necks and stretchy hems.** When you're struggling with weakness and fatigue, you don't want to waste energy wrestling with your wardrobe. Large neck holes and slouchy shoulders are stylish and easier to manipulate over your head and arms. As for fabric, pick stretchy Lycra or spandex blends, especially if you have trouble raising your limbs.
- **Snaps and Velcro closures.** Buttons can be terribly frustrating when you've lost grip strength and dexterity, but several companies have introduced cleverly disguised Velcro closures, magnetic strips and other finger-friendly mechanisms to help you "button up" without the pain and discomfort.
- **Wrap around designs.** If you have trouble with your balance or suffer from rigid or spastic muscles, it may be easier to do away with traditional fasteners altogether. Shirts and skirts that you wrap around your body and fasten with a tie or a snap are excellent solutions, and the fact that they allow for a personalized fit is a nice bonus.
- **Flat seams.** When you use a wheelchair or scooter, streamlined fabric will help you stay comfortable: look for flat instead of raised seams, fewer belt loops, and jackets with cutaway backs, so you don't have bunches of fabric pressing into your body.
- **Cleverly placed pockets.** Cargo pant styles are particularly helpful, since the extra pockets down the leg will grant you easy access to any accessories you may need. Look for jackets with big side pockets, which are easier to slide your hands into and out of.

You don't necessarily have to visit a specialty store for clothing that fits. When you go shopping, remember the key problems you have with dressing and eliminate items one by one until you find something that checks all the boxes. This way, you won't buy something on impulse, just to find out it doesn't suit your lifestyle once you try it out at home.

Handy Tools to Help You Dress Comfortably

A whole new wardrobe can be expensive, so you may just want to invest in a couple of new pieces to start. As for the rest of your clothing, introduce a few of these tools to make dressing quick and stress-free:

- Button fasteners (for help with fine finger movements)
- Long handled shoe horn (if bending is a problem)
- Elastic shoelaces (no more fumbling with long laces)
- Zipper hooks (to quickly do up any zipper)

You'll find plenty of other handy devices to help you dress, and for even more comfort and personalization, you can have a tailor adapt some of your pieces for you. It's amazing how a hidden Velcro strip or a band of snaps can change your demeanor and activity level, so invest in your clothing for a happier life!