



Clothing Ideas

Everyone feels better if their clothes are comfortable, smart and easy to manage. This information sheet gives ideas for making the best use of existing clothes and some points to bear in mind when buying new ones.

General considerations

- Most people with MND spend a lot of time sitting down, and styles of clothes should be chosen with this in mind. Avoid sitting on raised seams, ruckled clothing, or tight waistbands
- Clothes should be easy to get on and off: dressing and undressing can be tiring.
- Light-weight and easy fitting clothes are more comfortable: heavy or tight garments restrict movement.
- Changing the fastenings can make clothes easier to manage. When buying new clothes, always check the type of fastenings used, or if possible choose garments with no fastenings at all.
- Many people with MND feel the cold acutely (particularly in the hands and feet), whilst others can suddenly feel unbearably hot.

Warmth

- At home sitting in a quilted bag is more satisfactory than a blanket, which slips and often does not protect the back of the legs.
- The best insulation is provided by trapping air between layers of loose-fitting, light-weight clothing.
- Although only the hands and feet may feel cold, in order to keep them warm, it is important to insulate the whole body.
- Start warm: if possible, warm your garments before putting them on, and make sure that the bedroom is warm whilst dressing.
- Fabric choice: quilted fabrics, and wool or acrylic materials, which trap air and resist compression.

For people who suddenly feel very hot:

- choose loose-fitting garments, with open neck lines.
- a cardigan or waistcoat, which is easy to remove, can be worn over a cotton-rich shirt/blouse.
- at night, wear a cotton-rich night-shirt.
- Fabric choice: cotton or cotton mixtures with a high proportion of cotton and a low proportion of man-made fibres. Absorbent fibres (such as cotton, viscose or modal) are best if perspiration is a problem. Avoid nylon and polyester as far as possible.

Outdoors

In cold weather, the wind chill factor contributes most to feeling cold:

- start out feeling warm.
- cover as much of the body as possible (don't forget the head). If a hat is unacceptable a thick scarf can be snuggled up around the ears.
- wear layers of light-weight but warm clothes.
- on top, always wear a windproof, and preferably, shower proof garment.

N.B. a hat on a sunny days too - sunburn and heat-stroke are very unpleasant.

Quilted, windproof jackets or anoraks are comfortable, if the zips are difficult to manage, choose a jacket with a storm flap fastened with poppers, or sew on toggles. Many also fasten with Velcro.

Ski departments in chain stores or sports shops stock light-weight and very warm trousers and jackets, as well as long-sleeved vests and long johns.

Thermal underwear in good designs can be bought from chain stores and mail order catalogues (to save a shopping trip)

For wheelchair users, the special showerproof capes and sitting bags give the best protection against cold, and are available from a number of sources.

Woollen tights, leg warmers or over-knee socks are attractive and practical.

Sheepskin, fur-lined or quilted mitts keep hands warm.

Tops

Tops which can be worn outside skirts/trousers are often a good choice, but they should not be too long. Large neck openings and armholes, and easy fitting sleeves make dressing easier.

When sitting down, head and shoulders are seen first, so an attractive neckline, or a pretty scarf or necklace can add a great deal to an outfit.

The traditional man's shirt is difficult to put on and fasten. Look for casual styles made from a knitted fabric which stretches more easily, but can also be worn with a tie (clip ons are available).

Skirts and dresses

To look good when sitting, choose a skirt which is long enough to cover the knees adequately. Dresses and skirts with elasticised waists are easy to put on and "give" when sitting.

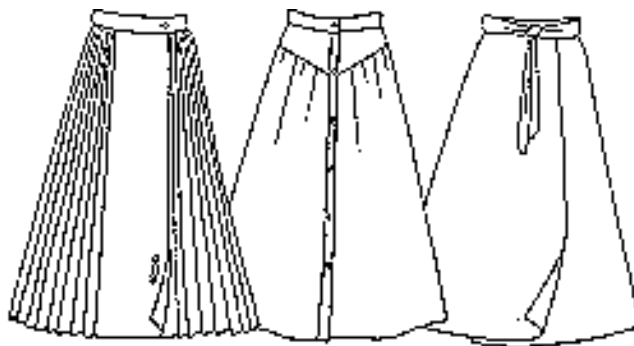
Fairly full skirts made of light-weight material are comfortable to sit in, and are easy to lift out of the way when using the toilet. Both straight and very full skirts are more difficult to cope with.

Prior to using the toilet, a skirt can be tucked into a belt or waist band, or even held in the teeth. A wrap-over skirt worn with the wrap-over at the back is useful because it can simply be pulled open at the back.

For wheelchair users a front wrap-over or completely button-through style may be convenient, because the skirt can be undone and left behind on the wheelchair when transferring onto the toilet.

Very full skirts can also be a nuisance with wheelchairs as they can catch in the wheels

If the fastenings on a skirt are difficult to manage, they can be replaced by lengths of Velcro.



Kilted, front buttoned and wrap over styles

Trousers

Zips are more easily pulled up and down if a key-ring is hooked straight through the eye.

Narrow-legged trousers make dressing difficult, and longer-length trousers should be chosen to allow for the material which is taken up when sitting.

Many people find track suits comfortable and practical, but if there is a fluffy lining which tends to cling, it may be difficult to pull the trousers off.

Trousers which have a completely or half elasticised waistband may be the easiest to manage. Tailored styles with pleats into the waistband are easier to remove quickly than those which are closely fitting.



It is possible to make any pair of trousers easier to remove by inserting a 12" zip through the waistband in each side seam. Side seams will have to be opened and the pants attached to the trouser waist band with 1" dabs of Velcro. This enables the whole rear section of the trousers to be dropped prior to sitting on the toilet. If this adaptation is made then underwear will also have to be altered.

- Mid-calf length garments are safer than full length, particularly when going up and down stairs.
- A button through night-shirt is easy to put on and avoids the need for pyjama trousers.
- If moving about in bed is difficult, styles made from smooth shiny fabrics, such as satin, polyester or nylon can help.
- A few people (men and women) prefer to wear nothing at all.

Underwear

- Underwear made of man-made fibres may produce a lot of static electricity; cotton underwear does not and is cooler in hot weather.
- Pants are available in a great variety of styles. High legs have no elastic. Long leg pants are warmer. Mini briefs are easy to push down.
- Both boxer shorts and slip briefs are easier and quicker to manage than Y-Fronts.
- French Knickers are an idea. If the leg is wide enough, the crotch can be pulled to one side to use the toilet



Wide Legged French Knickers

Slip briefs (left) boxer shorts (right)

Eating

If extra protection is needed for clothes whilst eating, try using a really big table napkin, tucked into the collar, or tied round the neck, Continental-style. (Perhaps every member of the household could have one?). This can be supplemented by wearing an apron.

Tabards with waterproof linings and clip-on aprons are available from specialist suppliers.

Footwear

Slip-on shoes are easy to put on. Elastic shoelaces make it possible to slip the feet into lace-up shoes without undoing the laces. Shoes and slippers with Velcro fastenings can be found in the shops.

Slipper socks are warm for people who are not walking

Wide shoes and those with very long openings are also useful

It is, of course, most important that the fastenings are secure, and that the shoes or slippers give support and do not slip off when the wearer is walking.

Betterfit, 232 Burton Road, Woodville, Swanlincote, Derbyshire DE11 7JR, Tel: 01283 225540

Fastenings

Buttons can be replaced by sewing on small "dabs" of Velcro hook. Then the buttonhole is stitched up and a dab of Velcro loop is sewn on underneath it, finally, the button is sewn on top of the buttonhole, to restore the normal appearance.

It is often sufficient to replace buttons or hooks with larger ones. A button with a longer shank may be easier to manage.

Mantle hooks and toggles are decorative as well as functional, and are particularly useful on outdoor clothing.

Popper sets are available for attaching poppers neatly to clothing. These are easy to undo, but for closing, require the ability to position the two halves of the popper accurately.

Velcro can be used to replace other fastenings. It consists of two strips, one composed of tiny hooks and the other, of tiny loops. A Velcro fastening is closed simply by pressing the two strips together, and is opened by pulling the strips apart.

The hook side of the Velcro should be sewn on facing away from the skin, because it is harsher than the Velcro loop. It generally gives a better appearance, and is easier to manage, if Velcro is sewn on in small "dabs", rather than continuous strips. Velcro can be obtained in various colours and widths. It is important to close the Velcro fastening when the garment is washed, otherwise the Velcro hooks become choked with fluff.

Sources of additional information

- The Occupational Therapist, on clothing, dressing techniques and dressing aids.
- The local Disabled Living Centre for advice on specialised clothing and lists of suppliers.
- 'All Dressed Up' booklet produced by the Disabled Living Foundation. Gives guidance on choosing clothes and useful dressing techniques for elderly people and people with disabilities. £4.95 including p&p available from;

Disabled Living Foundation
380-384 Harrow Road
London
W9 2HU
Tel 0207 289 6111
Fax 0207 266 2922
www.dlf.org.uk

Specialist Catalogues

The Special Collection - Large selection for men and women reasonably priced

The Bury Boot and Shoe catalogue - comprehensive range of wide fitting footwear

Both available from: J D Williams Ltd, 53 Dale Street, Manchester M60 6ES. Tel: 0161 238 2619 or 0161 238 2000

Wearable Clothing Ltd, Queenslie Business Centre, 19 Blairtummock Road, Glasgow, G33 4AN, Telephone: 0141 774 9000, Fax: 0141 774 9064

Solutions for the Disabled (Silvalea Textiles), 116 Queen Street, Newton Abbott, Devon, TQ12 2EU, Telephone: 01626 333793

Jolliman-Comfortable Clothing for Men, 24 Blenheim Road, Lancing, West Sussex, BN15 8UQ. Clothes Line 01903 766300.

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