Doing Daily Activities with One Hand

These hints can help you with your daily activities if you are able to use only one hand or arm because of an injury or other problem.

Personal Care

- Use shampoo bottle with a pump.
- Use liquid soap with a pump instead of bar soap.
- Use a long-handled sponge with a bendable handle to reach your back and opposite side. Wrap the sponge head with a towel after bathing to help you reach the same areas to dry.
- Use pop-top toothpaste instead of screw-on cap. Rest toothbrush on counter to put on the toothpaste.
- Put on deodorant by leaning forward and let your weak arm dangle or swing away from your body. Spray deodorant may be easier.
- Use a goose neck clamp to hold the hair dryer while you use your one hand to comb.
- Use spider clips to hold hair back instead of rubber bands.
Dressing

Putting on a T-shirt or knit shirt
1. Put your weak arm in first, and pull the sleeve up to your shoulder.
2. Lay the shirt on your lap. Put the strong arm in the opposite sleeve and pull up as high as you can between your elbow and shoulder.
3. Use your strong arm to pull the shirt up over your head.

Putting on a shirt that buttons
1. Put your weak arm in first and pull the sleeve up to your shoulder.
2. Bring the collar around the back of your neck and put your strong arm into the second sleeve.
3. Use your strong hand to button the shirt. If you have trouble doing buttons with one hand, you may want to try a buttoning tool.
   ▶ For a buttoned shirt, you can also try to button it before you put it on. Then, put it on like a T-shirt.

Putting on socks
1. Put your strong hand inside the sock, just over the fingers, not up to the palm.
2. Cross your leg resting your ankle on the opposite knee or prop your foot up on a stool if you are able to lean forward.
3. Slide your toes into the sock opening the sock by spreading your fingers.
4. Pull the sock up to your ankle.

Shoes
- Use shoes that slip on or use Velcro closures. Avoid shoes that are too loose or flip flops that may cause you to slip or trip.
- Replace standard shoelaces with elastic laces.
Toileting

- Use a raised toilet seat or a grab bar on the strong side to help you sit and stand.
- To help with wiping, try long-handled tongs to reach. You may purchase a commercial bathroom aid.

In the Kitchen

- To open jars, use a piece of waffle-weave shelf liner to help grip the jar on the counter or between your knees.
- Use rocker knives to help with one-handed cutting, or use pre-cut items.
- Deep-sided dishes or containers can help keep food on the plate.
- Put the bread or bun inside a container or against the side of a deep pan to keep it still while you put spread on it.
- Keep heavier items on the counter so that you can slide them from place to place.
- Only put lightweight items above eye level in cabinets.
- Store items in easy-to-open containers.
- Store liquids in small containers instead of half gallon or gallon containers.
Other

• When reading, use 1 or 2 pillows on your lap to keep the book near eye-level.

• Use rubber bands around each ½ of the book to keep pages open. As you read, slide the next page under the rubber band.

• Use a clipboard to keep paper still while writing.

• Wear a fanny pack at your waist for personal items instead of using a purse.

• Try to buy cans with pop-top lids or use a one-handed can-opener.

Where to get equipment

You will be able to find some of the items at most department stores, but other items may need to be purchased at a medical supply store or other specialty stores.

Before buying equipment, check with your insurance company about what is paid for under your plan. You may have to buy equipment through certain places for insurance to cover the costs. Some things will not be covered by insurance at all.

The Arthritis Association website, www.arthritis.org, has a list of easy to use products that may be helpful to you.

Talk to your physical therapist, occupational therapist, doctor or case manager / patient care resource manager (PCRM) about your equipment needs.

Talk to your doctor or others on your health care team if you have questions. You may request more written information from the Library for Health Information at (614) 293-3707 or email: health-info@osu.edu.