Using Equipment to Help in Daily Activities

You may need to use adaptive equipment to help you with your daily activities because you are not able to move or bend over easily. Talk to your doctor or therapist about your options or limits to how you can move safely.

**Reacher**
Getting things from cabinets or off the floor can be much easier with a reacher. There are various types available.
- Rearrange your cupboards to have items you use most often within easy reach.
- If you cannot get an item with your reacher, ask someone for help.

**Dressing**
Different devices can help you with putting on your clothes or shoes and socks.
- If you have trouble reaching your feet, wear slip-on shoes or use elastic shoelaces so you will not have to bend over to tie your shoes.
- A long-handled shoe horn will help you put shoes on or take stockings and socks off.
- A **dressing stick or reacher** may be used to put on pants.
• Use the hook or the reacher to catch the waist of underwear or pants.
• Place your weak leg first in the pants when dressing, and take it out last when undressing.
• Pull the pants up over your knees.
• Stand with the walker in front of you and pull your pants up.

• Socks and stockings are easier to put on with a sock aid.
  • Slide the sock or stocking onto the sock aid. Be sure the heel is at the back of the plastic and the toe is tight against the end.
  • You may secure the sock in place with the notches on the plastic piece.
  • Holding the cords, drop the sock aid out in front of your weak side foot.
  • Slip your foot into the sock and pull it on.
  • Release the sock from the notches on the plastic piece using your dressing stick or reacher.

To take the stocking or sock off, use the hook on the dressing stick or the reacher to hook the back of the sock down over your heel and push the sock off your foot.

Using the toilet
A raised toilet seat will keep you from bending too far when sitting or standing. The higher seat also makes it easier to stand up from the toilet.

Bathing
Unless you have a walk-in shower, you will have to learn a new way for getting in and out of the bathtub. You will be shown the proper way before leaving the hospital. When you get home, refer to the instructions below before bathing.
• Talk with your doctor or therapist about what bathing method is best for you.
• Have someone help you the first time you bathe at home.
• You may sponge bathe at the sink until you are comfortable or have help to get into the shower.
• If you have a walk-in shower or tub shower, you may stand and shower as long as you feel steady and balanced.
• If you need to sit to bathe, you will need a **shower bench or tub transfer bench**. Make sure the shower bench is placed firmly in the tub. Have someone adjust the height of the shower bench so it is as tall as it can be to allow you to rest your feet on the floor of the tub when you are sitting.
• Always be sure to turn on the cold water first to avoid burning yourself.
• Have a secure place to put your soap to avoid dropping it. Try soap on a rope or a deep soap dish.
• You may find it helpful to use a portable shower hose and a long-handled sponge or bath brush.

**Using a tub transfer bench or shower bench**

1. Place the shower bench firmly in the tub. Stand with your back toward the tub. Be sure you have someone with you to help you and to hold the bench steady, if needed.
2. Slowly lower yourself onto the shower bench, sliding your weak leg forward as you sit, reaching back to grasp the shower seat.
3. Lean your trunk back as someone helps lift your weak leg over the edge of the tub.
4. Slide back and make sure you are in a safe sitting position. Have your helper lower your foot to the floor of the tub.
5. To get out of the tub, have someone lift your weak leg out and place your feet flat on the floor before you stand.
Standing tub transfer using crutches

1. Place the shower bench in the tub in case you tire quickly and need to sit.
2. Stand with your good leg next to the tub.
3. Place your cane or crutches into the tub first, or use grab bars, if they are available.
4. Put your weight on the grab bar, cane, or crutch and step into the tub with your good leg.
5. On the weak side, bend your knee back to step into the tub.
6. Bring the other crutch into the tub. Be careful standing on the wet tub surface.

To get out, turn around and repeat the same procedure. Put the cane or crutch on the good side out first, and then the good leg. Then bring your weak leg out, and the crutch on the weak side.

Getting in and out of bed

- Before your discharge from the hospital, the physical therapist will show you how to get in and out of bed safely.
- You will get in and out of bed on your weak side.
- A hospital bed may be needed at home. Your physical therapist, nurse and case manager will talk with you about this if needed.
- Some people find it helpful to wear pajamas made of silky materials to help them slide more easily on the sheets.
Getting into a car

Know how to safely get into the car. It is better to ride in a mid-size or large car with regular bench seats rather than bucket seats.

- Use a thick pillow or cushion on the seat.
- Make sure you stop about every 30 minutes to get out and walk around, or at least shift your weight from one leg to another.

To get into the back seat using a walker:

1. First lower your bottom onto the cushion on the seat in a semi-reclining position.
2. Use good leg to scoot yourself farther back across the seat.

To get into the front seat using a walker:

1. Enter the car on the passenger side and make sure the seat is as far back as possible.
2. Recline the seat back as much as you can so you will be able to scoot up to the back of the seat.
To get into a car using crutches:
1. Stand with your back toward the car.
2. Put your weak leg out ahead of you and slowly sit.
3. Scoot back on the seat then swing your legs into the car, first one leg then the other. Use the backs of the seats like arm rests to support yourself as you sit. If you have extra long legs, be sure to scoot back as far as you can.

Talk to your doctor or health care team if you have any questions about your care.
For more health information, contact the Library for Health Information at 614-293-3707 or e-mail health-info@osu.edu.

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