

Life hacks

The little things in life can sometimes be the most challenging. Life hacks are tips, tricks and creative ways to make everyday tasks simpler aiming to save you time and energy. Here are some potential ideas that may be helpful either at home or in the community:

Bathroom

- Pump-style body wash and shampoo in the shower can help to free up your hands maintaining balance in the shower
- Shower gel on a sponge instead of using a bar of soap can eliminate the risk of slips and falls when bending down to retrieve a dropped bar of soap
- A long-handled sponge or bath brush can be used to reach your legs, feet and back without bending, twisting and turning in the shower or bath
- A terry cloth robe can be used to aid with drying as this fabric will absorb moisture easier than a normal towel or alternatively place a towel on the back of the chair to dry off

Bedroom

- The bedroom environment can promote strategies that could help with getting dressed. Sitting on a chair with arm rests which could help with maintaining balance, alternatively sitting down on your bed could help to pace yourself, breaking the activity into smaller steps
- Adapting existing clothes or buying alternative clothes to meet your needs. For example; difficulty manipulating buttons can be overcome through opting for zip, Velcro fasteners or elastic waistbands
- Devices such as a long-handled shoe horns, dressing sticks or button hooks are simple solutions that could make getting dressed easier

Kitchen

- Placing a rubber band or applying duck-tape around the lid of a jar can help to open tightly sealed jars
- Place daily used items on lower shelves or counter tops to avoid having to reach or bend
- Cooking in large batches and freezing meals can reduce the amount of energy you expend in the kitchen - using a slow cooker can help to achieve this while reducing the number of dishes to clean
- A food processor can assist to chop and blend food more easily
- Aluminum foil or parchment paper to line cooking trays and pans can reduce the cleanup as you can place the paper/foil in the bin when finished

Living room

- Stick Velcro on the back of the remote control and arm chair or coffee table to ensure it remains in the same place and does not fall off a surface
- Use Velcro to keep electrical wires tidy and less of a trip hazard
- Secure notepads and pens in easy to reach spots e.g. by the phone
- A pillow is a simple way to help you adjust the height of a chair and help to maintain a comfortable posture

Around the home - falls prevention

- Keep your home environment well lit: try motion sensor LED lights in hallways which could assist you if you need to get up during the night
- Avoid mobilising in just socks or tights, consider using 'gripper socks' as a comfortable alternative
- A litter picker can help you to reach and grab items from higher or lower levels without you having to twist, turn or bend

Fatigue management

- Prioritise activities by putting your tasks in order of importance to ensure you have sufficient energy to complete necessary tasks
- Break down tasks and activities into smaller units and take frequent breaks
- Planning: keep a diary of appointments and social events
- Symptom management: keep a diary considering daily activities and the time of day you might have felt fatigued. You can download a free template from the MS-UK website at www.ms-uk.org/sites/default/files/SymptomDiary.pdf
- Lead a balanced and healthy lifestyle - keep hydrated, exercise, rest

In the community

- First Buses have designed cards that help individuals to communicate any additional help or needs to a driver in a private and discreet way. Further information is available at www.firstgroup.com/bus-accessibility
- British Red Cross provides an opportunity for people to loan and borrow equipment such as wheelchairs or a commode. This could help individuals to trial equipment before making a commitment to purchase. Further information is available at www.redcross.org.uk

Technology

Apps can help monitor MS symptoms, diagnosis and disease management and help track physical activity and nutrition behavior. Below is a list of apps:

- My MS-UK: New Pathways magazine
- MS Self: can record symptoms, energy levels, activity, thoughts and feelings
- SymTrac: helps to track wellbeing and symptoms over time