

Upper limb fractures

A guide for patients and their carers

Your occupational therapist is



9231 0561 and pager _____

Please note the following information is a guide only. Contact your Occupational Therapist if you have any questions.

Having an upper limb fracture can change how you do everyday activities. Activities which are normally completed with two hands will now be done with one hand. As a result daily tasks can take longer to complete.

These tips will help you to complete a range of daily tasks.

Personal care

Showering

- Sit on a shower stool to help with your balance.
- You should be able to wash your upper body on your own. A long handled sponge can help to wash your lower body.

Going to the toilet

- You will be able to go to the toilet by yourself with one hand.
- An 'over the toilet frame' can help you to get on and off the toilet.

Dressing

It is best to choose clothes that are loose fitting. Shirts or jackets that open at the front will be the easiest to put on.

Dress while sitting, at least at first, until you feel confident enough to balance while standing.

1. Support the affected arm on your lap. Hold the neck of the garment and with your good arm, shake out any twists
2. Place the garment on your lap with the outside facing up and collar closest to you.
3. Arrange the sleeve opening so that it is close to your affected arm.
4. Using your unaffected arm, gently lift and place the hand of your affected arm into the sleeve.
5. Work the sleeve over your hand and up towards your shoulder.



6. While gently leaning forward, pull the collar behind your head with your unaffected arm.

7. Feed your unaffected arm through the sleeve by pulling your arm up and out.



Other tips:

- If wearing a brassiere, fasten the hooks at the front then turn it around to the back.
- You might need help to put on your socks and do up your shoes. Your Occupational Therapist can provide you with long-handled aids, such as a shoe horn.
- Small aids, such as a button hook, may also assist with dressing. Ask your Occupational Therapist to demonstrate these.

Grooming

- Hair: you will be able to brush your hair with one hand. You will need help to tie your hair up.
- Shaving: electric razors are recommended for your safety.
- Tooth brushing: electric toothbrushes can help if you have trouble with coordination.

Eating

- You may need some help to cut your food into small pieces.
- Non-slip mats or dampened cloths can be placed under your bowl or plate to stop it from moving when you eat.

Household tasks

Cooking

- Store frequently used items above or on the kitchen bench so they are easy to access
- Purchase pre-prepared meals which only need to be heated up.
- Use a kitchen trolley to transport several items at once around the kitchen.

Laundry

- You will be able to load/unload your washing machine with one hand.
- Use a basket on wheels.
- It is recommended to hang clothes on a clothes horse.
- Help may be needed to hang big items on the line, such as bed sheets.
- When ironing, it is recommended to lower the ironing board, and iron your clothes while sitting down.

Vacuuming

- You may need help when vacuuming.
- Try to vacuum small areas of the house at a time.

Shopping

- You can shop online and have your groceries delivered to your house.
- If you choose to go to the shops, you might need help to reach high shelves or carry heavy items.
- A basket on wheels is easier to use with one hand.

NB - You can ask for a social worker to arrange formal services to help you when you go home.