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# MOTOR NEURONE DISEASE

## FACT SHEET No 4B

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### Practical ideas and advice for people with upper limb weakness (2)

#### ROUND THE HOUSE

##### 1. Door Knobs and Locks

It often helps to provide extra leverage on knobs and keys by;

- a multi-purpose knob turner.
- a plastic or home made wooden “enlarger” which fits over knobs on Yale locks.
- enlarged key grips.
- Velcro on round door knobs.

Some aids / ideas can be seen on display at the Independent Living Centre

##### 2. Carrying things

You can use specially designed equipment but first, use your imagination

- an apron with big pockets (e.g. gardening apron).
- a bag slung diagonally across the shoulder, or around the waist.
- a freehand tray (carried in one hand).
- trays with non-slip surfaces, or cover with Dycem – non slip matting.
- specially designed, stable trolleys are available, for use around the house.

##### 3. Cooking

Look for labour saving gadgets in shops - but look for ease of operation.

Lightweight bowls and utensils are easier to manage.

Specialist companies offer a range of items to deal with specific problem, e.g.

- a variety of jar openers.
- clamps or non-slip material, eg “Dycem” to stabilise things.
- peelers and graters.
- boards to help with buttering bread.
- kettle tippers.

Have you considered a microwave oven? It can be positioned at a height to suit you, lightweight containers can be used and the risk

of burning yourself when getting food in and out of the oven is greatly reduced.

##### 4. Electrical Fittings and Switches

Electrical equipment (for example, alarms and computers) can often be operated by remote control switches - and these can be triggered by movement in any part of the body;

- rocker or touch pad switches to replace conventional switches.
- extensions to bring sockets up to a convenient height.
- touch lights that switch on using skin contact.

##### 5. Telephones

Modern technology offers a number of choices

- hands free operation (a built in microphone loudspeaker enables you to talk without lifting the handset).
- memory (ability to store frequently used numbers, which can be dialled automatically by pressing just one button).
- cordless telephones, which you can carry round the house can also be useful but, before you buy one, it is important to check whether you can easily operate the handset, which tends to be heavier than that of a conventional telephone..
- use a modem and computer to talk to other people through a bulletin board..
- Contact DIRC on 8223 522 to find out about the disability bulletin board.

NB Telecom provides a range of phones appropriate for particular disabilities at no extra charge. Phone Free Call 1800 068 424

##### 6. Alarms

To alert someone inside the house

- special beepers are available
- intercoms or even baby alarms can be used.

To call for help outside the house, there are telephone systems available that when activated, automatically contact emergency services, family or friends.

## **LEISURE ACTIVITIES**

### **1. Reading**

Whatever you use to position your books, achieving the correct height and angle is crucial for comfort:

- To support books, magazines and small newspapers, use a cantilever table, which can be sloped, or an adjustable bookstand.
- To stop books slipping, use Dycem.

Turning pages can be a problem:

- To separate the pages more easily, use a stationer's rubber thimble on your finger, or on the end of a short wooden rod to give better reach.
- Have paper clips attached to each page by a helper. A small magnet attached to a short stick, makes this even easier.
- Borrow a page-turner from T.A.D.

### **2. Talking Books**

When reading or handling books is difficult, books recorded on ordinary cassettes from your local library can give much pleasure.

### **3. TV, Video, Radio And Cassette Players**

- Most television sets now have a remote control.
- Video recorders with on-screen programming are easier to operate.
- Some radios have buttons, which can be pre-set to different stations.
- Cassette, CD and DVD players may need to have light touch controls.

### **4. Painting**

This is an absorbing and creative past time and remarkable results have been achieved by people with severe disabilities.

### **5. Card Playing And Board Games**

Be innovative! Here are a few suggestions;

- a card holder which takes a full hand of cards and displays them for play.
- cards held in an upturned clothes or scrubbing brush.
- an automatic card shuffler.
- large size cards which may be easier to handle.
- games with large size pieces (draughts, chess, scrabble, dominoes, solitaire).
- metal boards with magnetic pieces.
- computers chess and draughts make it possible to play alone.
- Use a rubber thimble

### **5. Sport**

Many people with MND have been active and enthusiastic sportsmen or women prior to the onset of their illness. In the early stages, activities such as swimming can be continued if patients monitor it and adjust for fatigue.

Although active participation will not be possible, interest and commitment can be maintained through links with local clubs, enjoying the companionship and giving support in other ways.

Notes:

TAD = Technical Aids for the Disabled

ILC = Independent Living Centre

Dycem = commercial brand of non-slip matting – available from hardware stores

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### **For more information, or support, contact**

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