



### Introduction

As we get older most of us would agree that we dress more for comfort and practicality while still retaining a sense of our own style. Dressing, when affected by motor neurone disease, can present challenges and this factsheet is written to enable you or your carers to meet those needs without spending unnecessary tiring hours trailing round shops for clothes and footwear. Although we cannot endorse or recommend particular suppliers you will find a short list of UK suppliers and services, both mail order and online, at the end of the factsheet to allow you to see the types of garments and services that are available..

### General

Early on in the disease you may not need to make many changes to your clothes but inevitably you will want to retain as much independence as possible and save your energy levels for activities more interesting than getting dressed.

In general make sure your clothes are made of lightweight easy-care fabrics for hot or cold days, easy fitting and not too tight or restrictive. A whole range of dressing aids is available, these include button hooks, zipper pulls, dressing sticks, long-handled shoe horns and similar useful items. See our factsheet 5A *Assistive Equipment* for on-line suppliers of these types of aids. It is best to get advice from your Occupational Therapist or MND Care Team Specialist on which items might work best for you before you commit yourself to a purchase.

### Fastenings & Adaptations

You can make simple changes like sewing on buttons with elastic thread or sewing up buttonholes and putting poppers or Velcro fastenings underneath. One supplier uses magnets as fasteners in their garments. Velcro is best fitted with the hook side sewn to point away outwards, away from the skin. If you do choose Velcro-type fasteners remember to close them up before washing or they can attract fluff! Some items of clothing can be made easier to pull on or off by sewing loops of a strong fabric to inside seams. Silk ribbon is both strong and non-irritating against the skin once the clothes are fastened.

Useful strategies to make dressing easier include starting to dress on your weaker side first, lying on a bed or resting on the edge of a bed or chair. Adding a key ring to zip-pulls or even changing side fitting trouser zips from short ones to long ones can aid dressing and undressing. Elasticated or half-elasticated waists and tracksuits are popular. If you can't sew you might like to find a local alterations expert who can assist you, get to know your changing needs and adapt some of your current wardrobe.

### Daywear and Outerwear

Clothing can be obtained from specialists suppliers for those with physical disabilities. Being less mobile may make you feel colder and the best form of insulation is provided by trapping air between loose-fitting light weight layers. Consider wearing cardigans or waistcoats

**MND Scotland is the working name of the Scottish Motor Neurone Disease Association, the only charity funding research and providing care and information for those affected by MND in Scotland.**

if you don't do so already. Fleece fabric is also very fashionable at the moment as well as being very warm. Padded waistcoats and ski jackets are also good recommendations. Fingerless gloves or mittens have been recommended by people with MND. Easy pull-on hats and snoods keep the body temperature up since a bare head can be responsible for half the heat lost from the body.

Standard wet weather clothing such as overcoats or anoraks are unsuitable for wheelchair users as rainwater eventually runs off the garments and pools in the seat of the chair, or worse. Specialised capes that cover both you and the chair so shedding water away from the seat and your feet are available for wheelchair users.

### Underwear

Underwear also needs to be easy to get on and off. Men might prefer wearing boxer shorts which are easier than Y-fronts and women might consider wearing French knickers. Front-fastening bras and stretch style bras aid dressing.

For our cold Scottish winters there are many suppliers of thermal underwear and socks. Don't forget to check out outdoor and skiing suppliers who feature a full range of lightweight performance apparel. Women might prefer leg warmers or over the knee socks to tights.

### Nightwear

Nylon lingerie, satin or silk make for easy transfers and both sexes might prefer one-piece nightwear such as nightdresses or nightshirts with back openings which can be easier to take on and off than pyjamas.

### Footwear

Slip-on or wide shoes are generally easier to manage than tight fitting lace-

ups. In particular, look for good support from the uppers and soles with good grip. If you do stay with lace-up shoes swap normal shoelaces for elasticated ones and choose shoes trainers or slippers with Velcro fastenings. Keep warm with sheepskin or fur-lined boots, slippers or slipper socks.

### Dressing for Wheelchair use

Adapting your dress if using a wheelchair no longer means compromising fit and fashion. Women might like to wear tops and shirts with attractive necklines or pretty scarves and jewellery. There are several specialist suppliers who understand the need for tops and jackets which are shorter at the back than the front and with adaptations for easier dressing and toileting. Wheelchair users often prefer ponchos or capes to long coats and sitting bags can be cosier and easier than blankets on cold days. Skirts can be worn with elasticated waists or in wrap-over or kilted styles. Button through styles can be replaced with Velcro openings and some prefer culottes with the look of a skirt but the convenience of trousers. Avoid pressure sores by choosing clothes which do not have you sitting on seams.



### Eating

If you experience difficulties with speech and swallowing try a large napkin tucked in at the neck, clip-on aprons, or tabards with waterproof linings. Adult neckerchiefs and false shirt fronts lined with terry backing are also available.

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### Feedback

As MND Scotland wants you to feel and look your best we have listed, below, some suppliers and services we already know of. Unfortunately we cannot give specific recommendations to any particular supplier or service provider.

We welcome your feedback on clothing issues and would like to gather information from all over Scotland on your

local alterations experts in order that we can assist others dressing with motor neurone disease in the future. If you would like to recommend an alterations service or feel you have something to contribute to the next version of this factsheet please contact MND Scotland's information officer on 0141 945 1077 or by e-mail at [info@mndscotland.org.uk](mailto:info@mndscotland.org.uk).

## Specialist Clothing Suppliers And Services

### **Able2wear Ltd** [www.able2wear.co.uk](http://www.able2wear.co.uk)

53 Donaldson Street  
Kirkintilloch  
East Dunbartonshire  
G66 1XG

Tel: 0141 775 3738

*Adaptive clothing and aids for disabled people and wheelchair users of all ages. Includes mens dinner suits and a special measure service.*

### **WheelieChix-Chic**

[www.wheeliechix-chic.com](http://www.wheeliechix-chic.com)

135 Mortlake Road  
Richmond  
Surrey  
TW9 4AW

Tel: 0298-392-9617

*Designer wear for wheelchair women.*

### **Allana** [www.allanasmyth.co.uk](http://www.allanasmyth.co.uk)

Unit 11

Eckland Lodge Business Park  
Desborough Road  
Market Harborough  
LE16 8HB

Tel: 01536-764267

Specialist women's designer clothing range especially nightwear.

### **Adaptawear** [www.adaptawear.co.uk](http://www.adaptawear.co.uk)

Moochi House  
30 Cole Bank Road  
Birmingham  
B28 8EY

Tel: 0845-643-9492

*Adaptive clothing for men and women*

### **Sheerlines** [www.sheerlines.co.uk](http://www.sheerlines.co.uk)

Sheerlines International Healthcare Ltd  
Unit 15 Gainsborough Trading Estate  
Rufford Rd, Stourbridge  
West Midlands, DY9 7ND

Tel: 01384-375600

*Covers, capes and extras for scooter and wheelchair users.*

### **Simplantex Healthcare Ltd**

[www.simplantex.co.uk](http://www.simplantex.co.uk)

145a Ashford Road  
Eastbourne  
East Sussex  
BN21 3AU

Tel: 0870-8707140

*Traditional capes and covers for wheelchairs with links to two Scottish suppliers.*

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### **Discretely Different**

[www.discretelydifferent.com](http://www.discretelydifferent.com)

21 Ferndale Drive

Ratby

Leicester

LE6 0LH

Tel: 01662-386338

*Pants for women with crotch opening at the front.*

### **Bassetlaw Fashion Services for Disabled People**

[www.bassetlawfashion.org.uk](http://www.bassetlawfashion.org.uk)

Unit 7 Canalside Workshops

Leverton Road

Retford

Notts

DN22 0DR

Tel: 01777-860206

*Charity offering bespoke clothing and alteration service*

### **The Independence Store**

[www.theindependencestore.co.uk](http://www.theindependencestore.co.uk)

*Online shopping for clothes and aids*

### **Fashion Freaks**

[www.independentliving.org/fashionfreaks](http://www.independentliving.org/fashionfreaks)

*Free sew-it-yourself patterns for wheelchair users.*

### **The Disabled Living Foundation (DLF)**

*has recently updated 9 information factsheets on clothing and footwear which are available free to download.*

[www.dlf.org.uk/news/latest/clothing.html](http://www.dlf.org.uk/news/latest/clothing.html)