



Be Pain Smart – Physical activity

Getting up and getting ready

After a brain injury and when you have chronic pain, it can be hard to move around. Even getting out of bed and getting ready for the day can be a big mission. Here are some tips to help you to make it a little easier – you might not need them all, but just pick the ones that are going to work for you.

When you are trying things in a new way, you will need to practice it for a while to get the hang of it. Remember to pace your movements, take breaks if you need them and ask for help.

If you are still finding getting up and getting ready difficult, exercises or training can be given by a qualified physiotherapist or occupational therapist to help you to manage your pain and become more independent in these activities.

Getting out of bed

Sometimes you might find it hard to get in and out of bed or even move around in bed. Make sure you have all the equipment you need before you start. When you want to get out of bed, follow these steps:

Step 1. Take your time

Step 2. Roll onto your better side

Step 3. Try to use your arm/s or other supports to push up into a sitting position

Step 4. Move your legs over the edge of the bed

Step 5. Sit on the edge of the bed and get ready to stand up



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Standing up

It can be difficult to stand up for lots of reasons, but it is important to make sure you do this safely. Safe steps for standing up include the following:

- Step 1.** Move your bottom to the edge of the bed or chair
- Step 2.** Place both feet firmly and flat on the floor
- Step 3.** Place both hands on the edge of the bed or chair
- Step 4.** Lean forward so that your nose is over your toes
- Step 5.** Push down through your arms to help you move your weight off the bed or chair
- Step 6.** As you begin to stand up, straighten your legs
- Step 7.** Let go of the bed or chair
- Step 8.** Stand up straight

Apart from these steps, a physiotherapist or exercise physiologist can give you exercises to help build the right muscles to make standing easier.

Getting ready

There are a few different parts to getting ready, such as showering and bathing, getting dressed and grooming yourself. You need to do these things every day, and often the movements can make your pain worse. Putting effort into these activities helps you to keep healthy and can boost your mood, too. Use the tips below to make a plan so that you can do these tasks more easily and manage your pain.



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Showering

Showering helps you to stay clean and healthy, to look neat and tidy and helps you feel good about yourself. The way you shower might have changed because you have difficulty with your balance, your movements might be limited, you may find it hard to get organised and have everything you need, your pain may get in the way or you forget the steps you need to shower. Below you will find some common problems and then some helpful tips to get things back on track.

COMMON DIFFICULTY	SOLUTION FOR YOU
Not showering every day. 	Set a regular time each day to shower. It helps if this is when you first wake up because you might get distracted later and forget to have one. Having a routine helps to ensure showering becomes a normal part of your day.
Feeling unsafe or getting tired in the shower. 	Get the equipment you need. Some people need extra supports like a shower chair or stool, or shower rails to keep safe. Getting support by sitting or holding a rail when you shower allows you to safely wash your legs, body and hair without fear of overbalancing. You can also use a stool to rest if you get tired or need to change position. Talk to an occupational therapist about what would help you.
Forgetting the steps in showering. 	Put up pictures or steps to remind you of what you need to do to wash and dry yourself.
Forgetting what you need for the shower. 	Try keeping everything in the shower recess. If you do not have enough room, put your things in a waterproof tub or toiletry bag, so you only need to remember to take it into the shower.



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Getting dressed

Getting dressed each day is important for comfort, regulating your temperature and feeling good about yourself; however, putting on and taking off your clothes can be a lot of effort when you have chronic pain. How you dress might have changed because some movements make your pain worse or your movements are limited. It is hard to get organised and remember what you need, and it is hard to wash or iron your clothes. Check out the common problems below and some helpful tips to help you get dressed.

COMMON DIFFICULTY		SOLUTION FOR YOU
Feeling unsafe or unstable when you are getting changed.		When you get dressed, try sitting on the edge of your bed or on a chair when you dress. This way you can safely put on each item of clothing and not be worried about falling over.
Cannot remember where to find clothing items.		Put labels on your drawers and wardrobe to remind you where each item is.
Forgetting the order in which you need to put clothes on.		Put up pictures or steps to remind you of what order you need to put clothes on.
Not changing your clothes each day.		Before you go to bed, put your clothes out for the next day.
Finding it hard to put on stockings or socks, or other clothing items.		Use a sock or stocking aid/gutter, or a clothing stick to help you put these on.



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Personal grooming

Brushing hair and teeth, shaving, putting on makeup, and washing your hands and face are all part of personal grooming. Doing these daily can help you to look neat and tidy, feel confident and support your health. You might find it hard to do these things now because your movement is limited; it makes your pain worse; you forget how to do things; or the sensation in parts of your body has changed.

Below are some common problems people with a brain injury and chronic pain face, and the solutions that could work for you.

COMMON DIFFICULTY		SOLUTION FOR YOU
Feeling safe or unstable, or needing a rest.		Have a chair ready in the bathroom so you can sit down while you brush your teeth, shave etc. You can safely do task and take a break when you need it.
Misplacing things you need, such as your makeup or razor.		Put labels on your drawers and cupboards in your bathroom to remind you where each item is. Put them back in the right place after you use them, so they are ready for the next day.
Forgetting which order to do things.		Put up pictures or steps to remind you of what order you need to do things each day.
Finding it hard to hold items or do some actions.		Talk to an occupational therapist about what could help you. They might suggest using an electric toothbrush or shaver. You may also need to make some changes to the setup of your bathroom to support you.



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My plan for getting ready

Now it is time to take these tips and make them work for you. Think of the problems that keep coming up for you each day, then using the tips, see what works for you, and the equipment or help you need. Here is an example.

COMMON DIFFICULTY	SOLUTION FOR YOU	EQUIPMENT OR HELP
It is often 5pm before I remember to have a shower.	I will plan to have a shower when I get up each morning at 7.30am.	I will put a reminder in my phone.
I keep forgetting where my socks are.	I will put labels on my drawers and keep my socks in a box near my shoes.	Sock box.
After I have a shower and get dressed, I am often too tired or in too much pain from standing for so long to brush my teeth or do my hair.	I will use a shower chair when I shower, and have another chair in my bathroom for when I get dressed and get ready so that I can take regular sitting breaks.	Chair for bathroom, plus I will contact an occupational therapist to see what shower chair would work best for me.



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Now it is your turn to have a go. In the first column, write down your common problems or difficulties that keep coming up each day. In the second column, write down the solutions that work for you from the tips above. Finally, write in the last column any equipment or help you need.

COMMON DIFFICULTY	SOLUTION FOR YOU	EQUIPMENT OR HELP
		
		
		
		
		
		