

Temporarily Living With the Use of One Hand

It's tricky, but not impossible to get on with your life even when one hand is not working.

Here are a few suggestions that may be helpful whether you are recovering from a hand problem or anticipating surgery on your hand. Although some of these points are an issue only if your writing hand is affected, most apply to problems involving either hand. Most situations can be managed without the need for devices to help.

If you are over the age of 60 and living alone AGE UK may be able to offer short term help 01904 726191 they will require a weeks notice.

Before surgery, if you can,

- **Ask for help.**

Enlist others ahead of time to help with:

- Child care
- Housework
- Meals

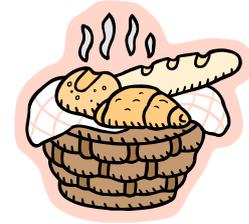


- **Practice with one hand**

- Dressing
- Undressing
- Using the toilet
- Brushing your teeth
- Showering

- **Prepare** for the first few days after surgery:
 - Open and re-seal cans and bottles you might need.
 - Open medication containers and leave easy to reopen. Remember to keep medicines out of the reach of children

Meals that don't involve using a knife and fork together e.g. sandwiches, minced meats, ready meals etc.



It helps to have...

- **In the shower**
 - Plastic bags and rubber bands to cover bandages. Use two at a time. Clingfilm wrapped really well over the bandaged area. If you wish to purchase a special cover ask the nursing staff for a leaflet.
 - Bottle sponge (soft sponge on a long stick) - for the armpit of your "good" hand.
 - Shower brush
 - Soap on a rope to wear around your neck in the shower.
 - A hair brush in the shower will help you to wash your hair.
 - Cotton terry cloth bathrobe - to dry your back.

- **In the bathroom**
 - Toothpaste, shampoo, etc. in flip-top or pump (not screw top) dispensers.
 - Consider an electric razor and electric toothbrush.

Dental floss on a "Y" shaped handle.

- **In the kitchen**

- Rubber jar opener mat (obtainable from stores like Lakeland Plastics, Kleenze, Betterware) to help open jars, but also keep things from sliding around while you are working on them.
- Electric can opener with a lid magnet strong enough to hold the can in the air - for one handed use.

- **Clothing**

- Large sleeve shirts and tops.
- In cool weather wear sweaters that you don't mind having the sleeves stretch.
- Choose shoes without laces to wear.
- Put away clothing which buttons, fastens or snaps in the back or which uses drawstrings.
- Use clothing with elastic waist bands
- Sports bra or a camisole instead of a bra.
- Try not to wear jewellery with fine fastenings.

A "wash and wear" haircut.

Avoid using small purses for loose change.

Sheila Gray

Nurse Practitioner in Hand Surgery 2015

