

# The ALS Treatment AND Research Center at UCSF

## Tips For Arm and Hand Weakness

Many people with ALS experience arm and hand weakness that affects their ability to perform every day living activities.

Below is a list of simple solutions that will assist you in maintaining the ability to perform daily activities.

### **SELF FEEDING**

#### For Decreased Grip Strength:

- Use built up tubing/cylindrical tubing (can purchased at a hardware store).
- Universal cuff: Elbow and wrist strength is used versus hand strength
- Economy wrist support: Supports wrist and utensil is maintained in place for feeding.
- Light weight cup with handles on both sides.

#### For Decreased Shoulder Strength:

- Use extension utensils or prop arms on an elevated surface to assist with decreasing the demand on the upper arms.
- Mobile arm supports help achieve controlled motion while eating.
- Extra long drinking straws.

#### One-handed technique:

- Place Dycem under scooped plate/dish to prevent slipping.
- Use rocker knife/pizza slicer to cut food.
- Use plate guard.

### **DRESSING**

#### Arm and Hand weakness.

- Adapt clothing for easier dressing and undressing.
- Use a button hook if difficulty with buttoning.
- Use Velcro instead of buttons if using buttonhook is too fatiguing.
- Elastic waist bands are easier to manage than zipping and buttoning.
- For difficulties with zipping, place fishing line hook in each zip (invisible) and use one finger to pull up and down versus using a "pinching motion".
- Use elastic shoe laces/Velcro straps/lace lock.

### Leg Weakness:

- Sit to dress lower body.
- Use a sock aid for putting on socks if unable to do “crossed legged method”.
- Use a reacher for holding pants/underwear if unable to dress using a crossed leg method or unable to reach down to feet.
- Slip on shoes versus shoes with shoe laces are easier to put on.

### **GROOMING and HYGIENE**

- Long handled brushes/combs assist with limited arm movements.
- Universal cuff can be used to hold toothbrush, razor, hairbrush.
- Cylindrical tubing can be used to increase the grip strength on personal care items.
- Electric toothbrushes and electric razors decrease the energy expenditure on the hand and arm muscles.

### **TOILETING**

- Raising the height of the toilet may assist with the ability to get on and off. Use a commode and or raised toilet seat.
- Extended toilet aids can assist with reaching peri (personal) area.
- Bidet hygiene system (electric cleansing system)
- Toileting at bed level: Use female/male urinal.

### **Where to buy aids to daily living:**

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

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

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

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