

Getting Dressed: Your Lower Body

Making it easier

This handout describes 4 arm exercises to increase strength and range of motion while you are recovering after heart surgery.

Helpful Tips

- Choose clothes that fit loosely.
- Gather and put within easy reach:
 - All the clothes you want to wear, including socks and shoes
 - Your *adaptive* (helpful) equipment, such as a reacher or sock aid
 - Your walking device
- Before you stand up to pull up your pants, make sure:
 - Your socks and shoes are on
 - The waist of your pants is above your knees

Putting on Pants, Skirts, and Underwear

- Lay out your clothes so that they are easy to reach.
- While you are sitting, use the reacher to grab the waist of your skirt, pants, or underwear.
- Use the reacher to lower the clothing item to the floor. Put your weaker leg in first. Then put your stronger leg in.
- Use the reacher to pull your clothes up over your knees.
- Use your walker or walking device to help you stand up.
- Grab the waist of your clothes with 1 hand.
- Put down your reacher when you can reach your clothes with your hands.
- Pull your clothes up over your hips.
- If needed, you can sit down to zip or button your pants or skirt.



Use tools like a reacher to make getting dressed easier.



Scan for a digital copy of this handout.

Taking off Pants, Skirts, and Underwear

- Unbutton or unzip your pants or skirt while you are sitting down.
- Use your walker or walking device to help you stand up. Pull your clothes down over your hips.
- Sit down. Use the reacher, if needed, to lower your clothes down over your legs to the floor.
- Slip your weaker leg out first. Then, slip your stronger leg out to remove the clothes all the way.

Socks

- Put your sock on the sock aid. Make sure the bottom of the sock is at the back of the sock aid.
- Hold the strap(s) of the sock aid with both hands and lower the sock aid to the floor.
- Keep holding onto the strap(s) and slip your foot into the sock aid. Pull on the strap(s) until the sock aid comes out of the sock.
- **To remove your sock:** Use your reacher or dressing stick to push the sock at the back of your heel and then over the rest of your foot.

Shoes

- With your reacher, hold onto the tongue of your shoe. Lower the shoe to the floor.
- Slide your foot into the shoe. You may need to use a long-handled shoehorn to help your foot slide past the heel of the shoe.
- **To remove your shoe:** Use your reacher or dressing stick to push down on the heel of the shoe as you slide your foot out.

Questions?

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or healthcare provider if you have questions or concerns.