

## ADAPTIVE CLOTHING DRESSING GUIDE

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How we dress can affect our mood and everyday life. Clothing is a means of showing our **personality** and staying **positive**. Facing a daily struggle with dressing can leave many feeling frustrated, isolated and a loss of independence.

Adaptive clothing can offer a range of ways to overcome a variety of dressing difficulties. It is often the smallest changes that make the biggest difference and discrete adaptations to clothes can **transform lives**, giving back **confidence**, providing **dignity** and helping to maintain **independence**.

The Able Label clothing was created after Founder Katie, saw her own grandmother who had been diagnosed with Parkinson's, begin to struggle with independent dressing. The clothing range for both **women** and **men** has been designed to provide **style without the struggle** for either self or assisted dressing, across a range of conditions and needs.

Here are some of their top tips on easier dressing.

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## CLOTHING ADAPTATIONS

### KEY CONSIDERATIONS

- **Fabrics:** Comfort is key and fabrics go a long way to ensuring you look and feel great in what you wear. High **quality, natural materials** like cotton, bamboo and viscose (from wood pulp) give much needed all-day soft comfort. They are also excellent in helping to regulate body temperature and sweat. Quality fabrics ensure that garments last for years to come, even after many wears and washes.

**Super stretch** fabrics including jerseys, and especially those made from viscose with elastane, help make getting into and out of clothes easier as the garment moves with, rather than against you. Stretchy fabrics also give greater ease and comfort of movement when wearing.

*Suggested Products:*

[Palazzo Spot Print Jersey Pull On Trousers](#)

[Imogen Jersey Velcro Shirts](#)

[Clara Jersey Stretch 3/4 Sleeve Top - Mustard](#)

**Easy Care Fabrics** which are non-iron, make clothes easier to look after. They will often contain synthetic fibres, so look out for mixes such as poly-cottons that give you the best of both worlds, being easy-care and comfortable. Easy-care fabrics can also be washed at higher temperatures, making them ideal for care homes.

*Suggested Products:*

[Camilla Seersucker Half Sleeve Velcro Shirts](#)

[Men's Hugo Oxford Velcro Non-Iron Shirt](#)

For many, **temperature regulation** can be an issue. Finding the right fabric plays a big part in helping to manage this. Pure natural fabrics including cotton, bamboo and viscose, help to maintain a comfortable and constant temperature. Those who may feel the cold more, will benefit from materials such as brushed cotton and fleece, as they provide a soft and heavier cosy layer. Those who experience fluctuations in temperature will find wraps and capes helpful, as they have no arm holes for quicker and easier dressing on and off.

*Suggested Products:*

[Julia Brushed Cotton Velcro Nightdress](#)

[Anthony Brushed Cotton Velcro Nightshirt](#)

[Bamboo Socks](#)

[Lilly Luxury Velcro Capes](#)

- **Easy Fastenings:** Poppers, hook and eye and Velcro can all help to overcome fiddly fastenings like buttons and zips. We find that Velcro fastenings require the least amount of coordination and strength to use, making them ideal for anyone who struggles with fine motor skills.

There are many types of **Velcro** out there, so make sure you look for clothing options that use a high grade Velcro. The Able Label has sourced a premium Velcro that proves easy to open and close, whilst staying firmly fastened when wearing and washes well too.

To make your clothes last even longer, ensure you close all of the fastenings when washing to prevent damage caused to clothes or fastenings.

Some jewellery comes with magnetic fastenings, which are much easier to manipulate than regular fiddly clasps. Magnets should be avoided by anyone with a pacemaker though.

*Suggested Products:*

[Tabatha Pure Cotton Velcro Short Sleeve Tees](#)

[Pearl Cluster Magnetic Necklace](#)

- **Shapes:** Consider shapes that are comfortable and well fitting with extra room where necessary. **Fit and flare** style tops are a great example and ease the process of dressing as well as providing all day comfort. They have more room from the waist down, flattering your figure and hiding any bloating. **Raglan sleeves** provide a larger surface area making it easier to get arms into armholes. **Wide leg trousers** are similar, in making it easier to dress legs into. If you feel the cold, sleeveless **capes and ponchos** have **no armholes** making them easier to pop on and off.

*Suggested Products:*

[Stella Jersey Long Sleeve Velcro Tops](#)

[Maisy Short Lightweight Velcro Mac](#)

[Blanche Cable Knit Poncho](#)

[Palazzo Spot Print Jersey Pull On Trousers](#)

- **Front Opening:** To avoid uncomfortable overhead dressing, fully front opening options, such as shirts and nightdresses provide a perfect solution. There are front opening designs, with easier adaptive fastenings which are really helpful. Bras can prove particularly tricky, as they traditionally fasten at the back. Front opening options make it a lot easier to reach and see how to align the fastenings.

*Suggested Products:*

[Jenny Front Opening Velcro Nightdress](#)

[Olivia Pure Cotton Long Sleeve Velcro Shirt](#)

[Men's Hugo Oxford Velcro Non-Iron Shirt](#)

[Front Velcro Fastening 1020 Comfi Bra](#)

- **Wrap Styles:** For dressing with reduced movement, wrap styles can make a huge difference. **Fully opening wrap skirts** mean that you don't need to bend down to pull them up and down - simply wrap around, fasten and go! This design makes dressing quicker, easier and safer. Wrap skirts can also make toileting easier too by spinning the opening round to the back. **Fully opening wrap tops and dresses** avoid awkward back fastenings.

*Suggested Products:*

[Delia A Line Linen Look Velcro Wrap Skirt](#)

[Linda Jersey Long Sleeve Velcro Wrap Top](#)

[Naomi Floral Wrap Dress](#)

- **Elasticated Waistbands:** Design features including elasticated waistbands can prove a huge help. Options with a flat front and elasticated back create a smart look, yet provide that extra all-day

comfort and reassurance. The Able Label features elasticated waistbands on nearly all of their trouser styles including on pull-up and Velcro fly options.

*Suggested Products:*

[Flavia Ponte Straight Leg Pull On Trousers](#)

[Monica Velcro Fly Trousers](#)

- **Helpful Styling:** If getting about is difficult, carrying things may be too. Look out for clothes with **pockets** to help with keeping useful items in easy to reach places. Pulling trousers up can be especially tricky too, so search for options with secure **belt loops** or **elastic panels at the waistband**. These enable you to put your fingers through, to aid the process of pulling them up whilst requiring less hand or arm strength. When looking for coats **slippery linings** are a must, as they allow for quicker and easier dressing into and out of.

*Suggested Products:*

[Freya Straight Leg Corduroy Pull On Trousers](#)

[Marilyn Wool Blend Velcro Coat with Raglan Sleeve](#)

[Diana Velcro Polar Fleece Dressing Gown](#)

[Sophie Cardi Long Velcro Cardi](#)

- **Colour Coordination:** Cognitive difficulties from a stroke or other conditions can make the process of dressing into clothing the right way round complicated. The Able Label has worked with Occupational Therapists to find a solution. There are several items within their range that incorporate colour coordinated internal trims - **lime for left and red for right**, which help with dressing the right way round. No other adaptive clothing retailers offer this feature and we think it's a great idea.

*Suggested Products:*

[Maria Jersey Front Opening Velcro Vest](#)

[Tabby Pure Cotton Long Sleeve Velcro Tee](#)

- **Hospital Visits and Easier Access:** Should you need easier to dress clothing when attending hospital or doctors appointments, discrete openings on garments can be very helpful and give greater dignity. **Zips** at the cuffs of sleeves and trouser hems allow for more room when dressing in and out of providing easier access. Whilst **wrap style** tops and ponchos simplify check-ups and stays, with no tricky overhead dressing required. **Front opening nightdresses and nightshirts** for short or long stays in hospital provide added independence when it comes to self dressing. **Comfort is key** - look for natural jersey fabrics with stretch for ease where possible.

*Suggested Products:*

[Molly Jersey Waterfall Cardigan](#)

[Frankie Straight Leg Jersey Pull On Trouser](#)

[Janet Pure Cotton Floral Front Opening Nightdress](#)

[Men's Andrew Pure Cotton Short Sleeve Velcro Nightshirt](#)

**Post surgery**, non-wired bras with no metalwork in comfortable naturally breathable fabrics are a must. Front fastening styles are available meaning no awkward confrontation reaching the back to fasten them. Many feature discrete inner pockets for peace of mind too. Some options also contain silver, known for its healing properties.

*Suggested Products*

[Front Popper Fastening 1010 Comfi Bra](#)

[Front Velcro Fastening 1020 Comfi Bra](#)

[Silver Post Surgery Front Fastening Bra](#)

- **Assisted Dressing:** For those who may require assistance with dressing, wrap and back opening styles are best making it easier for care givers to assist more quickly, easily and safely.

For those who spend long periods in a seated position and have very limited movement, a simple opening at the back concealed with

overlapping fabric for dignity are best, as they also make toileting easier. Search for seam-free styles to help prevent bed sores.

*Suggested Products:*

[Jade Floral Open Back Short Sleeve Nightdress](#)

[Lilly Luxury Velcro Cape](#)

- **Incontinence:** One in three women have light bladder leakage. Specialist incontinence underwear for both women and men is available to provide peace of mind. There are now far more attractive styles with leak proof designs to provide protection and the option of machine washing makes them reusable. When it comes to toileting, fully opening wrap skirts are quick and simple to dress out of, whilst stretchy pull on trousers take away the difficulty of fastenings. Velcro fly trousers are an adaptive option for easier toileting too, without having to completely remove trousers.

*Suggested Products:*

[Men's Washable Incontinence Underwear](#)

[Super Absorbent Washable Full Brief Knickers](#)

[Men's Spencer Straight 5 Pocket Velcro Trousers](#)

[Palazzo Spot Print Jersey Pull On Trousers](#)

- **Wheelchair:** Perfect for those spending a lot of time in a seated position, maxi skirts incorporating stretch for extra 'give', provide comfort, coverage and warmth when seated. For an elegant look, wrap skirts and dresses open at the front for comfortable all day seating, and the overlapping fabric helps to keep legs covered.

High waisted trousers are best to ensure trousers do not fall down when seated and provide greater comfort.

Make sure that tops do not come down too long at the sides as they could potentially get caught in wheels. Poncho styles are perfect, tending

to be longer at the front and shorter at the sides. Ponchos are very on trend too!

Search for options that are seam-free at the back and sides so sores are avoided.

*Suggested Products:*

[Debbie Maxi Jersey Wrap Velcro Skirt](#)

[Frankie Straight Leg Jersey Pull On Trouser](#)

[Suki Wool Mix Poncho](#)

[Blanche Cable Knit Poncho](#)

## SUPPORTIVE EXTRA SERVICES

- **Alterations Service:** Clothing can be altered to fit your specific needs, by making the most of hemming and alterations services. The Able Label makes life easier by offering this service across any of their items for just £12.
- **VAT Exemption:** Did you know that when clothing has been designed to make dressing easier for people with a long-term disability, chronic or terminal illness, it can be eligible VAT relief. Check with retailers for more information on exemption and eligibility. You can find out more about this here > [VAT exemption](#).
- **Free Returns:** It can be really helpful shopping from home, especially if it is difficult getting out to shops and trying on clothes in small changing rooms. But what if you buy something and it's not quite right? When shopping online, keep an eye out for whether the shop offers free returns. This is something The Able Label do as standard on all UK orders.
- **Customer Service:** Like with anything, it can be extremely helpful to speak to someone and get advice. Contact adaptive clothing companies



directly and they should be able to help advise what items would help you. They will be more helpful and better understand your needs than mainstream retailers.

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## TIPS FOR EASIER DRESSING

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- **Dress in a seated position or with the support of a rail or handle, in front of a mirror if possible.**
- **Choose comfortable and well fitting clothing.**
- **Use dressing aids for extra help e.g. [long handled shoe horns](#)**
- **Welcome help from a carer or loved one if needed.**
- **Wash Velcro adapted garments with fastenings close to maintain strength and to avoid Velcro damage.**

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## SUMMARY

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Where possible, take time to discover suitable adaptive clothing options and trial easier ways to get dressed, as this can significantly help to reduce the time and stress dressing may take in your daily routine. Finding out what specific adaptive features are helpful and work for you or a loved one is crucial as everyone's needs are unique. When you do, it can support greater independence, improve confidence and make a big difference to someone's life. Whether it be with simple touch-close fastenings or comfy and easy shapes, there is something available for all needs and often the smallest changes make the biggest difference.

If you believe you may be eligible for VAT exemption, don't forget to inquire with the clothing retailer, as this can save you a considerable 20% discount off your purchase.

So go out and enjoy shopping for clothes - there are more options out there which give style, comfort and discrete easy dressing than you think!