To ease the burden…”
Prepared by the American Parkinson Disease Association Inc., this information provides thirty-four proven ways to simplify life’s daily challenges for Parkinson’s sufferers. Its purpose is to help these patients maintain the greatest degree of personal dignity and independence possible.

Bathroom & Grooming Aids
Safety is a particular concern in the bathroom owing to its potential hazards for anyone suffering from impaired balance, difficulty in walking, tremors, slowed reactions, or an inability to call loudly for help.

Tips and suggestions:
1. Using a tub bench or shower chair to bathe safely.
2. Placing a non-slip rubber mat or adhesive anti-slip surfaces at the bottom of tub or shower.
3. Having grab bars installed instead of using weak bathroom fixtures as grab railings for support.
4. Removing as many slippery bathroom surfaces as possible.
5. “Soap on a Rope” keeps soap safely and conveniently within reach while showering or taking a tub bath.
6. Attach suction cups to a nailbrush and a soap dish. These items can then be affixed securely to the inside of the tub, shower or sink for easy access.
7. A sponge attached to a long handle—or a soft long-handled bath brush—will reach the lower legs, feet and back, facilitating balance by reducing the need to bend.
8. Use a terry cloth wash mitt instead of a washcloth.
9. For safety, an electric razor should be used, especially by those who suffer from tremors. A variety of electric razor holders are on the market that can make grasping the razor easier.
10. Install a night light in a bathroom wall socket.

Dressing Aids
The fine hand coordination and strength needed for buttoning and zipping clothing fasteners is sometimes impaired in Parkinson’s victims. Nevertheless, most patients feel more comfortable dressing themselves, even though it may take them longer to do so. They can compensate for their loss of fine motor skills by simplifying clothing fasteners in a variety of ways.

Tips and suggestions:
11. Lower clothes rods in closets so you don’t have to reach to high for items.
12. Choose clothing that closes in the front, with easy style and uncomplicated fastenings.
13. Put on and take off clothes from your stiffer side first, and have a family member or caregiver lay out the clothing.
14. Velcro closures make an excellent substitute for buttons and zippers. You can purchase Velcro in strips or dots at most fabric or variety stores. Remove the button and sew dots in place under the buttonhole and over the button area. Then sew the button on stop of the buttonhole where it would normally appear. Remove zippers and sew Velcro strips in place.
15. Use a buttonhook or Button Aid. The handles of these tools are more easily grasped than a small button when fine hand coordination is impaired.
16. Large, easily grasped zipper pulls make opening or closing trouser flies, jackets and coats less difficult.
17. Secure shirt cuffs with firm elastic bands. This method eliminates buttoning and the result is unnoticeable. (Be sure the bands are not tight enough to restrict circulation.)
18. A “dressing stick” is useful for pulling trousers and underclothing over feet and legs. It allows one to remain seated while dressing and reduces the risk of falling.
19. Elastic shoelaces need be tied only once, easily converting Oxford shoes to slip-ons. Or, have a shoemaker stitch Velcro strips onto standard tie shoes.

**Kitchen Aids**
The kitchen is the center of many activities of daily living. With a little advanced planning and organization, meal preparation can be made safer, easier and more enjoyable by limiting the amount of reaching and walking to be done.

*Tips and suggestions:*

20. Food items and food preparation implements should be stored near the dishwasher and sink; pots near the stove, etc.
21. Try preparing food while you remain seated. Also try cooking as much food as possible during “on” times and freeze for the meal you don’t feel up to cooking.
22. Use a cart with wheels to move items from room to room or from the kitchen to the table, to eliminate the necessity of carrying additional items and to offer support while walking.

23. A “Lazy Susan” placed in the center of the kitchen table or on a counter will hold numerous frequently used items and eliminate the need to collect these items before meals.
24. Use a rubber pad or a wet dishcloth under bowls and pans to stabilize them while preparing foods.
25. A cutting board with raised sides will prevent diced vegetables and small pieces of meat from falling off the board. Hammer a nail through the cutting board to act as a skewer to keep food from slipping while dicing or cutting.
26. Cut your food with a “rocking knife”, which does not require as much coordination as a straight knife.
27. Try using a “crock pot” to avoid the bending and lifting necessary in oven use. (“Crock pots” are also inexpensive and energy-efficient.)
28. Attach an old broom handle or a long wood dowel to the kitchen dustpan to collect floor sweepings without bending.

**Mealtime Aids**
Thanks to many attractive and durable mealtime aids on the market today, Parkinson’s patients can continue to eat with greater independence, despite tremor, rigidity or impaired fine hand coordination.

*Tips and suggestions:*

29. Attachable plate guards provide a rim on one side of the plate. Food, such as small vegetables, can be pushed against the guard, where it falls onto the fork. “Scoop dishes” contoured with raised edges, plates with suction cups and plate guards all help prevent spills and are readily available.
30. If eating is slow, use a plate with a hot water container attached to the underside to help keep food hot.
31. Silverware with built-up plastic handles is easy to grasp.
32. Use soup spoon instead of a fork for small pieces of food.
33. Flexible plastic straws can reduce spills when tremor exists.
34. A lightweight mug with a large handle for easy grasping is useful when tremor is severe.

American Parkinson Disease Association, Inc.
The American Parkinson Disease Association, Inc. (APDA) is the largest organization serving patients with Parkinson’s disease. Since its founding in 1961, APDA has maintained its commitment “To Ease the Burden, To Find the Cure” for Parkinson’s disease.

APDA provides extensive information through the distribution of manuals, publications, videotapes and newsletters. All of the organization’s services are free to the public and are funded entirely by voluntary contributions from concerned individuals. Through its research efforts and patient services, APDA not only enhances the quality of life for those afflicted with Parkinson disease, but promotes efforts toward finding a cure. Further information is available by calling the national headquarters toll-free at: 1-800-223-2732. For local information throughout the U.S., please call 1-888-400-APDA (2732).

Reference: American Parkinson Disease Association, Inc.
135 Parkinson Ave.
Staten Island, NY 10305
(718) 981-8001
(800) 223-2732
Fax: (718) 981-4399
E-Mail: info@apdaparkinson.org
Website: www.apdaparkinson.com

Joe Ward, Owner & CEO
Certified Senior Advisor (CSA)™