

Dyspraxia — Personal care hints and tips for girls/women



Some issues are different for girls than for guys. As each person with dyspraxia has a unique profile of strengths and difficulties, the strategies that work will vary from individual to individual. We hope you find some new ideas here!

Nails

- ◆ Nail salons are very much in vogue and save the hassle of trying to cut your own nails.
- ◆ Ask a friend to help you with nails.
- ◆ Use clippers rather than scissors and don't cut toenails too short. It's possible to buy table top nail clippers that might be easier to handle.
- ◆ A rough emery board might be easier to use than scissors.
- ◆ Use a cotton bud dipped in polish remover to get rid of blotches on the skin.
- ◆ Even if you don't manage to trim and polish your nails yourself, keeping them clean will make you feel more presentable.

Doing your hair

- ◆ The foundation of any hair style is a good cut. Choose an easy to maintain style.
- ◆ A short style may mean you don't have to dry your hair in front of a mirror. Some people have difficulty handling a hair dryer so short hair may be a good option.
- ◆ Embrace your curls to avoid the need for straighteners.
- ◆ Comb with conditioner in your hair to get rid of knots. Have some detangler to rub through your hair if needed.
- ◆ Some people find the 'Tangle Teaser' hairbrush easier to manage.
- ◆ If you have long hair a selection of scrunchies are useful for tying it back easily and without pain.
- ◆ Wash your hair under the shower to make rinsing easier.
- ◆ Ask your hairdresser for tips.
- ◆ Practise will improve your skills.

Menstruation

- ◆ Make a note on a calendar when your period is due so that you are not taken by surprise.
- ◆ Red paperclip reminder- you may find it useful to attach a clip to your handbag a couple of days before your period is due to remind you to put some sanitary towels or tampons into your bag.
- ◆ Pack a small wash bag with products ready so that you are not caught short at the beginning of a busy day. It also helps you to have your products discreetly packed away.
- ◆ Dark underwear may be useful as it will not show stains and a pair of black shorts to wear at night time might be a consideration.
- ◆ Whatever product you choose to use remember that practice makes perfect, so try things when you are period-free.
- ◆ Stick-on pads may be easier to manage than tampons (but pads with wings can be trickier!).
- ◆ Some girls prefer to 'be prepared' and carry with them some clean pants with pads already attached. They then change their whole pants with pad attached, putting soiled ones into a discrete bag to take home. This is a good strategy if you get anxious about changing sanitary wear in public toilets.
- ◆ Set a timer on your phone if you are likely to forget to change your sanitary wear.
- ◆ Have some wet wipes handy
- ◆ Pain relief and a hot water bottle or heat pad might be useful if you suffer pain.
- ◆ Be aware that your mood may be changeable.
- ◆ Keep clean - a nice hot shower can be comforting as well as hygienic.

Teeth

- ◆ It's easy to forget to brush your teeth so build this into your daily routine.
- ◆ Use disclosing tablets to make sure you clean thoroughly.
- ◆ Set a 2 minute timer on your phone (or use a kitchen timer) to make sure you brush for long enough.
- ◆ Consider using an electric toothbrush as this reduces the need to move the brush quite so much.

Shaving

- ◆ Always sit down when shaving.
- ◆ Try shaving after a bath or a shower.
- ◆ If you cut yourself, apply a cool damp flannel to your skin to stem the blood.
- ◆ Waxing may be a better option – if you think your pain threshold will cope!
- ◆ Or you could use hair removal cream.

Contraception

- ◆ If you take a daily pill but forget whether you've taken it or not, buy a 'pill organiser' box. If the days of the week are not on the packet, identify a quiet time each week to put your pills into the correct days.
- ◆ Discuss options with your practice nurse – some pills have to be taken at certain times of day, while there is more flexibility with others.
- ◆ There are various alternatives to the pill such as the implant and coil that can be forgotten about for weeks/months at a time. These may suit some people.

Make-up

- ◆ Keep it simple & go for subtle tones.
- ◆ Sit down when applying make-up and steady your elbow or forearm on a firm surface.
- ◆ Look on 'YouTube' for some good step-by-step tutorials or ask for a make-up lesson as a birthday present.
- ◆ Have a magnifying mirror and good light.
- ◆ Line up products in order of use.
- ◆ Use added grips on brushes if it helps.
- ◆ Lip crayons and lip gloss may be easier to apply than lipstick
- ◆ You may find it easier to get eyebrows threaded or waxed in a salon.
- ◆ Mascara can be tricky so having your lashes dyed may be an option.
- ◆ Do what is easier for you e.g. some girls find fingers better than brushes for applying makeup.
- ◆ Use mascara with a brush applicator to avoid lumps of mascara.
- ◆ Mascara that has filaments in to make the lashes look longer are more difficult to apply than those without.
- ◆ When applying mascara to the under surface of upper lashes have the mirror above eye level and look up into it.
- ◆ Conversely have the mirror lower when working on the lower lashes.
- ◆ Cotton buds dipped in a teeny bit of baby oil will remove smudges of even waterproof mascara.
- ◆ Roll-on perfumes can be easier to apply.
- ◆ Ask a trusted friend how you look when you've finished.
- ◆ If you don't feel comfortable wearing or applying make-up, take good care of your skin. This means eating well, drinking lots of water and trying to minimise the amount of chemicals you put on your skin.

Choosing clothes

- ◆ Have a friend or trusted adult shop with you.
- ◆ Keep sets of clothes together on a coat hanger.
- ◆ Avoid fiddly buttons and fastenings. Use Velcro to assist with fastenings.
- ◆ Look for clothes that are easy to put on.
- ◆ Choose clothes from a similar palate of colours so that they always co-ordinate.
- ◆ Look for jewellery and accessories which have large clasps or bracelets that are elastic.
- ◆ Choose well-fitting shoes which are snug around the heel for extra stability.
- ◆ Rubber/crepe or leather soles are less slippery.
- ◆ Avoid high heels or practice a lot in them.
- ◆ If you have a particular dress style that you enjoy, wear it with pride but be aware that certain clothes suit different situations (you wouldn't wear a bikini to a job interview!).
- ◆ Lay your clothes out the night before you are due to wear them. It is easier to co-ordinate items and reduces stress when you are in a hurry in the morning.
- ◆ Position a full length mirror near your front door so you can check your appearance before you leave the house.

Here are just a few comments from females who shared their personal stories and experiences in a nationwide poll commissioned by the Dyspraxia Foundation for Dyspraxia Awareness Week 2015.

"I think the way a women looks is more important in society than a man's looks. Managing my personal appearance and grooming is extremely hard"

"I don't wear make-up as I have never mastered getting it on without looking like a clown. I haven't been able to master hair straighteners. As a child I was always told I was unkempt"

"I struggle with hair care, dress sense, fastening buttons and shoelaces, oral hygiene and shaving. I can style my own hair but not the back. I never manage to pick out my own clothes – I have a friend do that for me."

"Hormonal changes as part of the menstrual cycle often make keeping track of things/organisation harder for a lot of women. Couple this with dyspraxia and it becomes a nightmare!"

"Menstruation will be difficult. She still can't shower by herself, changing sanitary pads will be difficult"

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