

Clumsiness



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What is clumsiness?

Clumsiness is a tendency to drop items or knock against objects more often than most people.

Clumsiness can occur through a variety of reasons, some will be temporary whilst others are more deep seated and longer lasting.

Anyone can become temporarily clumsy through tiredness, excitement, anxiety, drink or drugs, illness or injury. Other more serious causes include brain damage, various diseases of the nerves and muscles, delayed maturation or physical limitations.

Living with clumsiness

Most of us experience a degree of clumsiness at some time or another resulting in a broken cup whilst washing up for example! For a small number of people the tendency to trip over or drop things frequently makes even simple tasks difficult.

Frustration can arise when an individual fails to achieve a task which they see as simple but which their body refuses to complete. These feelings can be compounded by teasing or lack of understanding from others.

A left handed person trying to use items designed for someone right handed can appear clumsy. This can be overcome by ensuring that the correct equipment (e.g. left handed scissors) is available.

Practical Tips

- Obviously knowing the capabilities and skills of the individual concerned is essential. Opportunities will need to be provided for using such skills.
- During activities which require a certain amount of dexterity be aware that simple gadgets can make life much easier - try using thicker or different coloured cords for knotting

or pencils with large grips when drawing for example.

- A common sense approach to potentially difficult games and activities can prevent further frustration, for example, if playing a game involving the carrying of water, partly fill the container rather than have it brimming over!

What also do I need to know?

- Particular attention needs to be paid to safety wherever you are. Remember that any simple obstacle at ground or knee level can be dangerous if you fall over it. Tidiness will need to become automatic.
- Take extra care with activities which although simple may be potentially dangerous, such as cooking, fire lighting, using an axe or saw!
- Extra time and patience will be needed as any task requiring co-ordination will take practice.

Further Information

Discuss with the individual and/or their parents or carers the extent to which help is needed and learn any practical tips they have to offer.