

Polio Perspective

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Wheelin' in Style: Change Your Clothes, Change Your World

By [WheelerWife](#) |



Fashion. For people with disabilities, fashion can help us present ourselves to the world in a way that we would like to be seen. Fashion can allow us to help others see the person rather than the stereotype.

Now more than ever fashion is a great way for people with disabilities to brand themselves! Though our disabilities pose challenges, ask yourself how you want to market yourself to those around whether it be at work, out to dinner with your spouse, a night out with your friends, a church service, volunteering, etc.

How do you want to project yourself in these different situations? Want to market yourself as confident, trustworthy or professional at work? Need an outfit that says you're approachable and friendly while volunteering? Looking for something special to spice up a romantic dinner with your spouse?

Before getting dressed in the morning, think about the people you are going to see that day. Do you have a meeting or will you need to be doing a lot of moving around or traveling? Be sure to walk

through your day to choose an outfit that not only is functional for your adaptive equipment but also for how you want to project yourself.

As a woman in a wheelchair and less than 4 feet tall, I know all about getting creative with fashion choices! But the most important rule I have learned is that fashion can be fun and does not need to be expensive! Here are some of my favorite things:

Capes. Capes made a comeback this year and are GREAT for wheelchair users! They are roomy and allow flexibility for pushing and transferring in and out of the chair. They are also very easy to get on and off without constraining. Check out this great cape from Forever 21.

[p://whttww.forever21.com/Product/Product.aspx?category=Outerwear&ProductID=2000021402&utm_source=google&utm_medium=base&utm_campaign=product_feed&gclid=CJv-1NzawLQCFYKPPAodPTYASQ](http://whttww.forever21.com/Product/Product.aspx?category=Outerwear&ProductID=2000021402&utm_source=google&utm_medium=base&utm_campaign=product_feed&gclid=CJv-1NzawLQCFYKPPAodPTYASQ)

Cardigans are great for both men and women wheelers because of their versatility and their comfy factor. Layering is a great technique to use especially if your body temperature changes easily throughout the day. Keep a cardigan at work to slip on and off when it gets chilly or use one to dress up a business outfit or add some class to a jeans and t shirt. Cropped cardigans like these from the Gap ensure they won't get caught in the way. <http://www.gap.com/products/cropped-cardigan.jsp>

Comfy pants are a must for spending long hours sitting. Look for long waisted pants and jeans especially if you are going to be sitting in a wheelchair to ensure you don't have any wardrobe malfunctions or underwear peeking over the top.

Leggings are super versatile and easy to wear. Most have elastic waist so there's no messing with buttons or zippers and can be worn with a cute pair of flats or boots and with long, flowy blouses. This is a much more fashionable alternative to sweatpants but provide the same comfort. Try a pair of jeggings, combining both jeans and leggings, like these from Walmart.

<http://www.walmart.com/ip/20862922?adid=2222222227015213095&wmlspartner=wlp&wl0=&wl1=g&wl2=&wl3=17430536950&wl4=&wl5=pla&veh=sem>

Never underestimate the power of creativity when shopping for fashion with a disability. I have found some of my best deals and most loved outfits shopping in the kids department, petites and even the young men's department. You can find huge savings and the same styles buying in the kids rather than the women's department. Many girls' shoes go up to a women's size 5 or 6 and even bigger if shopping in the junior's department, but you will pay much less! Like these boots I recently bought in the Sear's girls department - adult style in kids' size and price: <http://www.sears.com/canyon-river-blues-girl-s-patty-fashion-boot-black/p-036VA50813501P?prdNo=3&blockNo=3&blockType=G3>

Need clothes in smaller sizes? Many kids and Juniors departments offer the same adult fashions in smaller sizes, such as GapKids, Aeropostale, Justice and Forever 21.

Don't be afraid to try things on! It will save you a trip back to the store to return it if it doesn't fit when you get home.

Never underestimate the power of online shopping. It will save you a trip to the store and fighting the crowds and you can take your time to find the styles you want to fit your lifestyle.

Don't forget to have fun with fashion! Change starts with us. Change your clothes. Change the world's perception. Change your life. Happy shopping!

POLIO DRAGGIN'
by Millie Malone Lill

The Polio Dragon is a common theme because, like a dragon, the effects of polio slumber for awhile, then awaken and attack us anew. So many of our stories are similar: we were paralyzed, our parents were just happy we lived through it, we pushed ourselves to recover and then, for awhile, we were 'normal,' or nearly so. Twenty or thirty years later, we begin to fall more often, we are in pain, we lack stamina and we are exhausted. Not a little tired, not sleepy, not even work worn. We are bone weary and it takes forever to get our 'oomph' back.

This fatigue is really hard to explain to other people. They don't really want to stand still while we explain the old 'I lost half my motor neurons when I had polio and now I am running on empty' spiel. I have heard, "I get tired, too. Sure wish I could take time for a nap." It sounds as if they are implying that I am merely lazy and asking for sympathy. Sometimes I run out of patience with this. I know, those of you who know me well will not be the least surprised that my very small well of patience has run dry, but I do try to be patient. It's just that it is not one of my talents. Anyway, on at least one occasion when faced with this attitude, I replied, "Oh, really? I'm so sorry you get that tired. Tell me, do you fall asleep while driving or feel like you are going to either pass out or vomit, like I do? Don't you hate that?!" That time, the person who was trying to make me feel lazy backed up and said no, she didn't get that tired. "Well, I do," was my reply.

How do you explain this fatigue to people who have never felt it? I have seen people in their 80s and 90s who have so much more energy than I do. I have always served on volunteer committees and usually these are run by older women. Frequently I would be 15-20 years younger than the average person on the committee. This can lead to problems. When I was asked to wash dishes for a few hours to help at a dinner theater this group was sponsoring, I said no, I can't stand for that long. You can imagine the looks I got. The rest of the women were well into their 70s and 80s and at that time I was in my late 50s. I was still walking, but not well. I didn't remain on that committee long, as you can imagine. I couldn't explain in a way they could understand that even though most of them were old enough to be my mother, I still was not able to outwork them.

I do try to get things done, but speed is no longer a part of it. Doing dishes means unloading the dishwasher, resting for awhile, reloading the dishwasher, resting awhile and then putting in the detergent and pushing the button. This from a woman who used to care for 10 kids at a time, who could carry 50 lb. bags of seed corn, seed beans, or fertilizer. I cooked for hordes of men at harvest time and baked 12 loaves of bread at a time several times a month. That ship has sailed. Vacuuming is nearly impossible because standing for more than 5 minutes causes my back to go into spasm.

What's the answer? If I had it, I would certainly give it to you. I guess we all have to come up with our own. Now that I use my power chair a lot, people don't expect as much from me, so that helps. There are things I can do and will do to help out, but that fatigue is a bearcat. Maybe I'll just tell them "Sorry, my Polio is Draggin'."

Web Corner

I heartily recommend Rolling Without Limits, a web page that features different disabled bloggers.
<http://rollingwithoutlimits.com/> Our first article is from this site.

Dr. Jacquelin Perry's death is reported here:
<http://www.polioplace.org/people/jacquelin-perry-md-dsc-hon>

Upcoming polio conferences:
<http://www.post-polio.org/net/calendar.html>

The Ten Commandments for Polio Survivors
<http://www.atlantapostpolio.com/PPScommandments.pdf>

A good excuse to play with Facebook:
<http://www.medicalnewstoday.com/releases/256772.php>

Lasting Improvement In Neuropathic Pain Offered By Deep Brain Stimulation
<http://www.medicalnewstoday.com/releases/256386.php>

Here is the "go to" web page for all things related to civil rights.
<http://www.hhs.gov/ocr/office/index.html>

The Spoon Theory
<http://www.butyoudontlooksick.com/wppress/articles/written-by-christine/the-spoon-theory/>

Dr. Perlman: Who is your typical post polio patient?
<http://m.youtube.com/watch?v=tNZaXqxZVdA&feature=relmfu>

Three alternatives to Google:
<https://duckduckgo.com/>
<https://ixquick.com/>
<https://startpage.com/>

A Little Bit of Humor

Klutz

Tired from waiting for their overdue baby, my daughter and her husband broke the monotony one night with a trip to the movies. My daughter went inside to get seats while my son-in-law bought popcorn and drinks in the lobby. Paying for the refreshments, my son-in-law knocked over his soda.

The clerk mopped up the mess and refilled his cup. Rattled, he then joined his wife. Talking over the background music, he dramatically described his embarrassing episode. One of his expressive gestures upset the bucket of popcorn.

He sheepishly headed back to the lobby.

When he was out of earshot, the woman sitting next to my daughter turned and said, "You're not going to let him hold the baby, are you?"

What Would You Like?

A customer in a bakery was observed carefully examining all the rich-looking pastries displayed on trays in the glass cases.

A clerk approached her and asked, "What would you like?"

The woman answered, "I'd like that chocolate-covered, cream-filled doughnut, that jelly-filled doughnut and that cheese Danish."

Then with a sigh she added, "But I'll take an oat-bran muffin."