

Occupational Therapy Toolkit

Multiple Sclerosis

Functional Limitations:

ADL, IADL, work and leisure impairment
Functional mobility impairment
Impaired upper extremity strength
Contractures
Unusual fatigue
Spasticity
Impaired balance and or dizziness
Sensory deficit (dysesthesias, numbness, paresthesias)
Pain - acute (trigeminal neuralgia, Lhermitte's Sign, optic neuritis)
Pain - non acute (spasticity, spasms)
Impaired coordination
Intention tremor
Cognitive impairment (attention, memory, planning, problem solving, abstract reasoning)
Depression
Environmental barriers
Knowledge deficit
Fall risk
Fear of falling
Bowel and bladder dysfunction
Impaired vision due to optic neuritis (diplopia, nystagmus, oscillopsia, scotomata)
Dysarthria
Other symptoms and conditions - heat intolerance, dysphagia

Occupational Therapy Intervention:

ADL, IADL, work and leisure training including but not limited to...
Recommend and/or provide adaptive equipment and alternative methods to compensate for impaired coordination, strength and endurance

Instruct in energy conservation techniques with application to ADL's

Instruct in techniques for preventing over-heating

Low vision compensation techniques and adaptive devices

Driving assessment and adaptations

Functional mobility training.
Train in proper transfer techniques and bed mobility skills as they relate to ADL and IADL tasks

Instruct in wheelchair mobility, car transfers and community mobility skills

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Provide graded UE, neck and trunk therapeutic activities and exercises to improve ROM and strength and fine motor coordination

- Stretching exercises to decrease spasticity and prevent contractures

- Strengthening exercises, progressed slowly (sub-maximal resistance with frequent repetitions)

- Avoid fatigue and increasing core body temperature

Educate regarding falls risk and prevention strategies

Assess home safety and functional safety and provide environmental modifications and adaptations

Teach compensatory techniques and safety measures for sensory deficits (bath temperature, burns in kitchen, avoid using heating pads, wear gloves in the winter)

Provide positioning splints

- Resting splint at night for weak finger and wrist extensors

- Wrist cock-up splints during functional tasks for weak wrist extensors

Provide functional balance activities to increase balance confidence.

- Graded activities in sitting and standing, supported and unsupported

Teach compensation techniques for incoordination and tremors.

- Weighted utensils, wrist weights, change of hand dominance, holding arm close to body or stabilizing on surface

Teach stress management and relaxation techniques

Provide cognitive retraining and training in the use of compensatory strategies

Assist in developing self-management skills (effective communication, positive coping strategies, stress reduction, physical activity and exercise, medication management, healthy eating, and making informed decisions about medical and alternative treatments)

Educate patient and caregivers in multiple sclerosis, the availability of community resources and encourage participation in support groups

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Patient Education:

1. Upper Body Strengthening and Stretching Exercises
2. Upper Body Strengthening Activities
3. Hand Strengthening Exercises
4. Fine Motor Activities
5. Passive ROM and Stretching Exercises
6. Splint Instructions
7. Memory Compensation Techniques
8. Energy Conservation Principles
9. Energy Conservation with Self Care Activities
10. Energy Conservation with Meal and Home Management
11. Stress Management and Relaxation Techniques
12. Falls Risks Assessment and Prevention Strategies
13. Home Safety and Functional Safety Assessment