

## Top 10 gizmos from Can Do MS™

by Beth Bullard, OTR

There are as many gizmos and gadgets as there are tasks and needs. Many have made their way into the mainstream and are available at local stores or online. Can Do Multiple Sclerosis, formerly the Heuga Center for Multiple Sclerosis, has put together a list of their top 10.

**10. A remote control.** They aren't just for televisions anymore. Many can interface with



appliances, lighting devices and even your car. The trick is to label remotes and keep them in a specific location. It's also helpful to keep a box of new AA and AAA batteries handy.

**9. OXO Good Grips utensils and tools.** This product line of kitchen tools features larger

handles with a comfortable sticky texture to help with manipulation.

**8. The HandyBar.** By sliding the HandyBar into the existing U-shaped striker plate on a car's door frame, you create instant support for getting in and out. The device holds up to 350 pounds and includes a seat-belt cutter and side-window breaker for emergencies.

**7. Clip and Pull dressing aid.** This consists of two plastic clips connected by straps. Clip the waistband of a garment, lower the clothing to the floor, place your feet in and pull on the straps to bring clothes up. It is also useful for keeping pants from falling to the floor while toileting.

**6. The personal desk assistant.** This is any device that keeps world order—**your** world order! It can be a calendar, notebook, daytimer, white board,

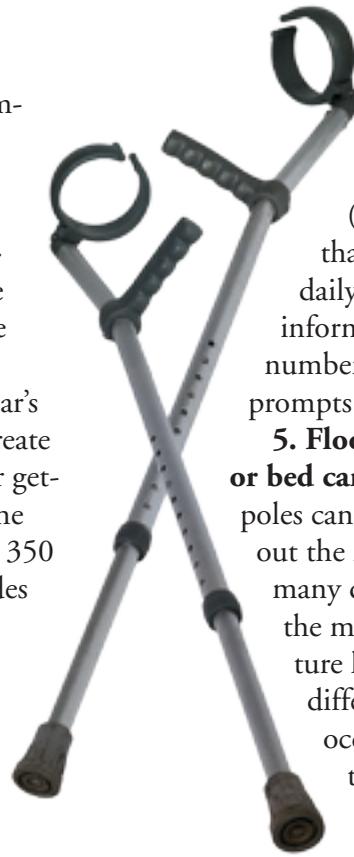


bulletin board, recording device or any digital device (like a BlackBerry) that helps you organize daily activities, stores information such as phone numbers, and provides prompts and reminders.

**5. Floor-to-ceiling pole or bed cane.** Floor-to-ceiling poles can be installed throughout the home. There are many different styles on the market. Many feature handles that lock at different positions. An occupational or physical therapist can help you determine the best product for your needs and provide training on how to use it.

**4. Mobility devices (okay, canes, crutches, walkers, scooters, wheelchairs).** Think of them like shoes. You may need several. Most of us wouldn't wear flip-flops in the snow or ski boots while surfing. The key is to use the right device for the right job. For best results, consult a physical therapist or occupational therapist. Together you can discover your ideal mobility prescription.

**3. Higher toilet seats.** The standard height is 15 inches; the desired height is 19 inches. There are many ways to achieve a higher throne: Raise an existing toilet using a four-inch platform; place an adjustable commode over the toilet; attach



a raised toilet seat with or without assistive arms; or purchase a new complete package.

**2. Velcro.** It comes in all colors and sizes, and the possibilities for use are endless. It can fasten clothing, secure a seat cushion, or give you a way to hang up a cane. My favorites are the sticky back dots.

**1. The reacher.** Use it to dress, close a drawer, open a door, empty a dryer, or shop in a store. They are available in different lengths and can be lightweight or foldable. Some have rotating jaws that lock on demand. Because



the reacher is only helpful if you can find it when you need it, we use sticky back Velcro to secure a reacher to a handy location. That makes it the most consistently helpful gizmo there is.

Remember, the human mind is our most incredible tool. If you are unable to find the gadget you need, invent one! How do your favorites compare to our top 10? [✉ editor@nmss.org](mailto:editor@nmss.org).

Beth Bullard's area of expertise is adult neurological rehabilitation with a specialty in MS. She was a member of the Heuga medical staff for over 10 years and is currently the director of case management at Northern Colorado Rehabilitation Hospital.

Visit [mscando.org](http://mscando.org) to find out more about Can Do Multiple Sclerosis's **can do** philosophy and lifestyle empowerment programs for people with MS and their support partners.

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