

MS can affect all of these.

### **Balance issues**

#### **Things that can help**

- Small changes to body positioning
- Exercise
- Assistive devices.
- Ask your doctor about tests to identify causes.
- Consider physical therapy to improve balance.

### **Spasticity**

#### **Things that can help**

- ✓ Smooth-motion exercise, such as swimming, biking or walking, to relax spastic muscles.
- ✓ Avoiding triggers, like a full bladder, constipation or tight-fitting clothes.
- ✓ Ask your doctor about drugs to ease spasticity.
- ✓ Ask an occupational or physical therapist about exercises or changes in daily activities.



- ❖ Some people think assistive devices are a sign of weakness or giving up. But assistive devices can provide independence and safety.
- ❖ A motorized scooter might help you save energy during daily tasks. Ask your doctor if an assistive device might be right for you. You can also learn more at AbleData.com, a national source on assistive devices and technologies



### **Resource**

- ❖ National Multiple Sclerosis Society  
<https://www.nationalmssociety.org/>
- ❖ Up-to-date  
<https://www.uptodate.com/login>



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### **Mobility problems**

Mobility is being able to move when and how you want to move. It is affected by balance and coordination. These two things depend on your ears, eyes, brain, depth perception and sense of position.

## Tremor

Things that can help

- Weights or supportive braces to help stabilize affected parts of the body.
- Ask your doctor about drugs to ease tremor.
- Ask an occupational or physical therapist about weights and assistive devices.

## Weakness

- ❑ Light weight training.
- ❑ Ask an occupational or physical therapist about assistive devices.
- ❑ Tell your doctor if your weakness is severe or lasts longer than 24 to 48 hours— a sudden increase in weakness could be due to infection, fever or drug side effects.



## Speech and swallowing

An estimated 40% of people with MS have speech problems at some point.

### Common speech problems

include:

- Hoarseness
- Loss of voice volume
- Slow speaking
- Slurred speech
- Trouble speaking clearly

### Try these tips to ease swallowing problems

- ❖ Add moisture to solid foods using sauces, broth, water or milk.
- ❖ Alternate each bite of food with a sip of liquid.
- ❖ Blend your food so it is easier to chew and swallow.
- ❖ Eat four to six small meals a day. This might be less tiring than eating three large meals.

- ❖ Eat slowly. Keep mealtimes calm.
- ❖ Sit upright when eating or drinking.
- ❖ Swallow solid foods at least two times per mouthful: once to pass the food down, then again to catch any leftover pieces.
- ❖ Take one small bite or sip at a time. This will reduce fatigue and help lower the risk of choking.



## Walking

- ❖ Over time, MS might make it harder to walk.
- ❖ Balance problems and weakness can affect how you walk. Exercise, medication, physical therapy or an assistive device, like a cane or walker, can help