

## Tips for asking for help



Help is not a dirty four letter word yet none of us wants to ask for it. As a scleroderma patient you will find asking for help is key to managing your symptoms and to living a full life. Consider the following:

1. Asking for help is a healthy way of accepting your diagnosis and moving toward the management of it.
2. Figure out what your needs are what you need help with. Create a list if needed.
3. Determine who in your life you trust and value as someone who can assist you with these tasks.
4. Provide this person or persons with specific requests so they can fulfill them for you. Give them meaningful tasks, with clear and concise timeframes. People want to feel needed and if you have real authentic needs, others will be more than happy to help you. Example, "I am finding it more difficult to do my grocery shopping since it causes more discomfort to my hands. Is this something you could assist me every other Thursday from 1:00-2:00 p.m.?" This is a very definable request.
5. Do not allow guilt to cloud your request. Often scleroderma patients will not ask others for help because they feel because they do not "look" sick, someone might perceive they are just being lazy or looking for an easy way out. Look for these opportunities as a way to educate co-workers, family and friends about the many mysteries of scleroderma. Many scleroderma patients have no visible symptoms of the disease yet they suffer from a variety of other internal symptoms that are painful and debilitating. By asking for help, you are sharing facts about the disease and creating awareness.
6. Accept the help graciously and without fear. Do not allow your self-esteem to be lowered because you are having someone help you. Instead enjoy the situation and find the positives involved.
7. Thank the person who is doing the task remembering appreciation can be found in small gestures that do not have a monetary value.