



Fact Sheet Series

Job Accommodations for People with Muscular Dystrophy

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JAN'S ACCOMMODATION FACT SHEET SERIES

JOB ACCOMMODATIONS FOR PEOPLE WITH MUSCULAR DYSTROPHY

Muscular Dystrophy (MD) is the common name for several progressive hereditary diseases that cause muscles to weaken and degenerate. MD is caused by defects in genes for muscle proteins. Most of these proteins appear to play a role in supporting the structure of muscle fibers. The term "muscular dystrophy" refers to a group of genetic diseases marked by progressive weakness and degeneration of the skeletal, or voluntary, muscles, which control movement. Individuals with MD usually exhibit contractures, a condition often associated with shortened muscles around the joints. Due to the abnormal and sometimes painful positioning of the joints, most individuals with MD have extreme fatigue and weakness as well as speech, mobility, and fine motor limitations. In addition, scoliosis, or curvature of the spine, is common.

The following is a quick overview of some of the job accommodations that might be useful for employees with MD. For a more in depth discussion, access JAN's publications at <http://askjan.org/media/atoz.htm>. To discuss an accommodation situation with a consultant, contact JAN directly.

Activities of Daily Living:

- Allow use of a personal attendant at work
- Allow use of a service animal at work
- Make sure the facility is accessible
- Move workstation closer to the restroom
- Allow longer breaks
- Refer to appropriate community services

Fatigue/Weakness:

- Reduce or eliminate physical exertion and workplace stress
- Schedule periodic rest breaks away from the workstation
- Allow a flexible work schedule and flexible use of leave time
- Allow work from home
- Implement ergonomic workstation design

Gross Motor Impairment:

- Provide a scooter or other mobility aid if walking cannot be reduced
- Provide parking close to the work-site and an accessible entrance
- Install automatic door openers
- Provide an accessible route of travel to other work areas used by the employee
- Make sure materials and equipment are within reach range
- Move workstation close to other work areas, office equipment, and break rooms

Fine Motor Impairment:

- Provide alternative computer access
- Provide alternative telephone access
- Provide arm supports
- Provide writing and grip aids
- Provide a page turner and a book holder
- Provide a note taker

Medical Treatment Allowances:

- Provide flexible schedules
- Allow a self-paced workload with flexible hours
- Allow employee to work from home
- Provide part-time work schedules

Speech Impairment:

- Provide speech amplification, speech enhancement, or other communication device
- Use written communication, such as email or fax
- Transfer to a position that does not require a lot of communication
- Allow periodic rest breaks

Stress:

- Develop strategies to deal with work problems before they arise
- Provide sensitivity training to coworkers
- Allow telephone calls during work hours to doctors and others for support
- Provide information on counseling and employee assistance programs

Resources Specifically for People with Muscular Dystrophy**Muscular Dystrophy Association**

3300 East Sunrise Drive
Tucson, AZ 85718
Toll Free: (800)572-1717
mda@mdausa.org
<http://www.mda.org>

Muscular Dystrophy Family Foundation, Inc.

3951 N. Meridian Street, Suite 100
Indianapolis, IN 46208
Toll Free: (800)544-1213
Direct: (317) 923-MDFF
Fax: (317) 923-6334
<http://www.mdff.org>

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