



**National
Multiple Sclerosis
Society**

**MS Learn Online
Feature Presentation
Everyday Tips for Your Kitchen and Cooking when Living with
Primary Progressive MS
with Shelley Peterman Schwarz**

Tracey>> Hi I'm Tracey Kimball

Tom>> and I'm Tom Kimball. Welcome to MS Learn Online. We are happy to bring you a new webcast series titled "Everyday Tips when Living with Primary-Progressive MS."

Tracey>> In this webcast we'll take you into the home of Shelley Peterman Schwarz, a woman living with primary-progressive MS. She shows us around her kitchen, giving us tips and ideas on how to get around the kitchen easier.

Shelley Peterman Schwarz>> Hi and welcome to my kitchen the heartbeat of the house where everybody wants to congregate. I have made some adaptations to my kitchen that make it easier for me. First, I have a lowered counter space which is not only good for when I'm helping prepare the meal but it's also easier to eat and have my place setting here as well. One of the other things is that the chairs are on castors so there easier to move out of the way and I can get around without having to ask someone for help.

I have two devices that I use when I cut up food for me. One of my favorite tools in the kitchen is my cutting board. The four stainless steel spikes are perfect for holding a piece of food, like an apple in place while I cut. The cutting board also has suction cups on the bottom so it doesn't move around on the table while I'm trying to cut something. One of the other things about this cutting board is it has a little "L" shape here for a piece of bread. And of the first tips I discovered was my kids didn't like peanut butter and jelly on bread that was torn apart. But I put it in the freezer, took it out frozen, spread the peanut butter on. By the time the kids washed their hands and sat down the bread was defrosted and they had a peanut butter sandwich just like they use to without any ripped apart bread.

I have this new toy, the *Ulu* cutting knife and it comes with a curved bowl. And this is very good for chopping items and however it is very sharp.

One of the other things I did in the kitchen was to get silverware and tableware that made it easier for me to eat. I discovered as a one handed person that it's hard to keep your plate from moving around. So I found a Rubbermaid placemat that made it impossible for the plate to move. I also put rubber bands around my glass. I found that little bit of resistance if the cup was wet or cold it wouldn't slip out of my hands and I had a lot fewer accidents. The plate is also lightweight. We replaced our pottery and got Corelle because it is much lighter and easier for me to handle. We also made some changes with my fork. If a big fork was too big for me I started using a salad fork. I also use the spaghetti spoon. This is really nice because I can use it to serve myself. I mean most of the time people are serving me but it's nice to have back the control how much spaghetti or pasta you want to eat.

Then if you are having trouble reaching. This is the old fondue fork and if you want to be able to reach a piece of fruit on the fruit plate. You don't have to extend so far you can use this long fork to get a piece of whatever it is, broccoli or fruit.

It's really nice to have an open floor plan. Get rid of obstacles and things that might trip you up if you're having trouble walking or anytime it just makes good sense, you don't want to get hurt. Remove throw rugs and clear out the space so it's easy for you to get around your house.

Counter space is always at a premium in homes. So get rid of the things you don't use and keep the space available for the things you do use. These U-shaped handles are great, make it easier for me to open the drawer and much easier than a door knob. This is with my weak right side so I can get that open. I keep the things in here that I use on a regular basis like my vitamins and medications.

And then I have a drawer down here where I can get to the dish towel and wash clothes so I can help with after meal clean up.

These are the slide out shelves and these came with the cabinets that we bought. But you can order slide-out shelves that are custom made that will fit into any cabinet.

You know, few of us can afford to have a fully accessible kitchen. But there are accommodations that we can make to make it easier for us to participate in meal planning and preparation. You want to be part of the action. You know when we were planning this kitchen, my husband and I talked about having an accessible kitchen, but he is a great cook and I'd be foolish not to let him continue.

Tom>> Shelley really is organized and full of great ideas. Just like me!

Tracey>> Yeah, right! Shelley is a great example of living life fully despite the progression of her MS. Personally, I like how her husband does much of the cooking though.

Tom>> I thought you might. Shelley didn't only make accommodations in the kitchen, you can see what she did throughout her house by watching the other programs in this series.

Tracey>> In addition to these resources found on the National MS Society website, you may also be interested in Shelley's website Meeting Life's Challenges.com.

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