



**National
Multiple Sclerosis
Society**

**MS Learn Online
Feature Presentation
Everyday Tips for Staying Connected when Living with
Primary Progressive MS
with Shelley Peterman Schwarz**

Tom>> Hello, I'm Tom Kimball

Tracey>> and I'm Tracey Kimball. Welcome to MS Learn Online where we have our final segment in the series Everyday Tips on Living with Primary Progressive MS with Shelley Peterman Schwarz.

Tom>> Keeping in touch with family, friends and the outside world can become much harder when living with a progressive course of MS. In this segment, Shelley tells us how she's managed to Stay Connected with the Outside World.

Shelley Peterman Schwarz>> It's easy to become isolated and disconnected when staying home is just so much simpler. I'd like to show you some of the things I do to get out easier. I wear a shawl, it's easier to put on than a jacket or a coat. I have mittens that are easier to put on, easier than gloves. There are lots of companies that design and carry easy on easy off clothing. Since we're leaving the house we have to turn off the lights. When we built this home we lowered the light switches and used rocker panels because there easy to turn on and off. One option might be to replace your switches at

home with rocker panels. Other devices are available to make it easier to turn off and on your lights.

You'll notice I have lever handles on my door because they are easier to operate. If you have door knobs there are many simple and inexpensive devices to adapt your doors.

This house has a barrier-free entrance. You may be eligible for financial assistance to build a ramp to make your home accessible. There are also portable ramps you can use when you get to your destination. Vehicles can be modified to help with your personal transportation. Since I don't drive I've compiled a list of people who will drive my van. In addition in many communities accessible transportation is available.

These days it is easy to connect with the outside world without ever leaving home. The internet opens the world for us whether it's for business or pleasure. There are so many adaptive technologies to help those of us with primary-progressive MS regardless of our level of disability. I personally use a telephone headset, speech activated software, and a larger monitor, and a small mouse that's easier for me to manipulate. Today, computers come with a host of accessibility features to help you control your keyboard and screen.

Another way to connect with the outside world is by inviting it into my home. Many services are available to bring the things I need to my home including: groceries, prescriptions, even library books and stamps.

I have several friends who come to my home each week to do range of motion exercises with me. One of my favorite days is game day. Every week some of my best friends come over to play Mahjong. They all pitch in to help setting up tables, chairs and snacks. Its fun and I love it.

Tom>> Wow... I'd like to thank Shelley Peterman Schwarz for inviting us into her home and her life. She has shown that a few creative ideas and some simple adaptations can make a big difference.

Tracey>> Indeed! Thank you Shelley for being so open with us. If you haven't had a chance to check out the other segments featuring Shelley's kitchen, bathroom and bedroom you'll want to watch those as well.

Tom>> For more ways to adapt your home to make it easier for you to live with MS, check out the National MS Society website.

Tracey>> You may also be interested in Shelley's website Meeting Life's Challenges.com, another great resource for you.