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DRESSING OF UPPER BODY IN FEMALES

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(All praise and thanks are due to Allah Almighty, the most merciful and most compassionate)

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This monograph helped me understand the anatomical, physiological, kinesiology, sociological, cultural aspects of upper body dressing in females, which is an important daily living activity. I hope my work meets my department's expectations and contributes to my academic learning. I am grateful to everyone who helped with this project.

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INTRODUCTION

Occupation includes the everyday activities that people do to take care of themselves, participate in society, and live meaningful lives. One important part of occupation is self-care, and dressing is a basic self-care activity that everyone performs daily. Upper body dressing refers to wearing and removing clothes on the upper part of the body, such as shirts, tops, blouses, dupattas, scarves, sweaters, and jackets. For females, this activity is closely linked to comfort, confidence, and personal identity.

Upper body dressing may look simple, but it actually involves many body movements and skills. A person needs good movement of the shoulders and arms, coordination of both hands, and enough strength and balance to dress independently. Chores like putting arms through the armholes, slipping into the clothes, adjusting a dupatta, or fastening buttons and zippers require careful control and planning. When a female is weak or in pain, poor coordination, sensory issues, or cognitive difficulties, even changing clothes can become tiring, frustrating, or time-taking.

Dressing styles and choices are strongly influenced by culture, religion, and community standards. In South Asian and Islamic cultures, females often wear clothing such as shalwar kameez, abaya, hijab, and long shirts which may involve extra steps like layering, draping, or covering the head and chest. These clothing practices are not just habits; they hold emotional, cultural, and religious meaning. So, dressing is not just about covering the body or following trends; it's a powerful form of self-expression, reflection of identity like the way you dress speaks before you even talk.

Being able to dress independently has a direct impact on a person's self-esteem and quality of life. Difficulty with upper body dressing can lead to relying on others and may affect self-esteem and social participation. This is commonly seen in individuals with physical disabilities, neurological conditions, injuries, or age-related changes, where limited movement or pain makes dressing challenging.

During upper body dressing assessment, the therapist looks at posture, balance, strength, joint movement, and hand coordination. The therapist also observes how a person completes each step of dressing, such as reaching for sleeves, lifting arms, or managing fasteners. Understanding these difficulties helps the therapist plan suitable strategies, adaptations, or assistive devices to make upper body dressing easier and more independent for females.

DEFINE UPPER BODY DRESSING

Upper body dressing is a basic self-care activity that plays a major role in a female's daily life. Like changing clothes from the upper part of the body, such as shirts, tops, dupattas, scarves, and jackets. Being able to dress independently boosts a person's confidence, comfort, and ready to participate in daily activities. When this routine becomes difficult, it can slowly affect a person's mood, self-esteem, and her independence.

Upper body dressing may look simple, but it requires enough strength of the shoulders and arms, coordination of both hands. Research shows that females with physical disabilities, neurological conditions, or developmental delays often struggle with tasks like putting arms through the armholes, slipping into the clothes, or fastening buttons and zippers. When these difficulties are ignored, this daily life work becomes exhausting and frustrating, often leading to relying on others.

Studies also show that many females with intellectual or developmental disabilities resist dressing activities. This resistance is usually because of sensory sensitivity, like discomfort from rough clothes, tide sleeves and tags that cause itching. Some people also struggle to hold small buttons or manage zippers due to poor hand growth. These problems are a sign of sensory motor difficulties, and these difficulties can cause dressing feels stressful and intense and may lead to feeling anxiety and discomfort in this small daily work.

Dressing styles of females not only affects the independence of women but it also determines the sentimental comfort in the society. Women who are unable to dress themselves and need other assistance in dressing up embarrass them. The loss of independence shatters the self-confidence of the women and further weakens them emotionally, mentally and eventually physically.

The role of occupational therapist is a crucial one in the lives of these people with difficulties. Occupational therapists design different tools, mechanisms and strategies that improve their physical and mental coordination, these tools help the patients gain their lost confidence back. These tools enable the females to become stronger, reduce the stiffness and as a result the females are enabled to dress themselves.

IMPORTANCE OF UPPER BODY DRESSING IN FEMALES

Support independence

A physically free and able woman definitely feels independent, confident and strong. Once she gets her physical liberty back she gets control of her daily routine as well. Upper body movement certainly shapes her daily life , her independence and they affect her pride, confidence and independence.

Provides Comfort and Protection

Upper body clothing protects the body from cold or hot weather that keeps the person comfortable. Choosing the right clothes also avoids irritations and unease from tight fitted clothes.

Builds Confidence and Self-Worth

When a female can dress herself easily and nearly, it improves her self confidence. Feeling presentable helps her feel more secure while in contact with others.

Encourages Social Participation

Difficulty in dressing can make a person avoid social situations due to embarrassment or dependence. Being able to dress independently allows females to take part in school, work, and social activities with confidence.

Reflects Overall Functional Ability

Upper body dressing involves movement, strength, coordination, and planning. When a person can dress independently, it often shows that their upper limb function and daily life skills are working well, which is important in occupational therapy assessment.

TYPES OF UPPER BODY DRESSING (IN FEMALES)

Two types

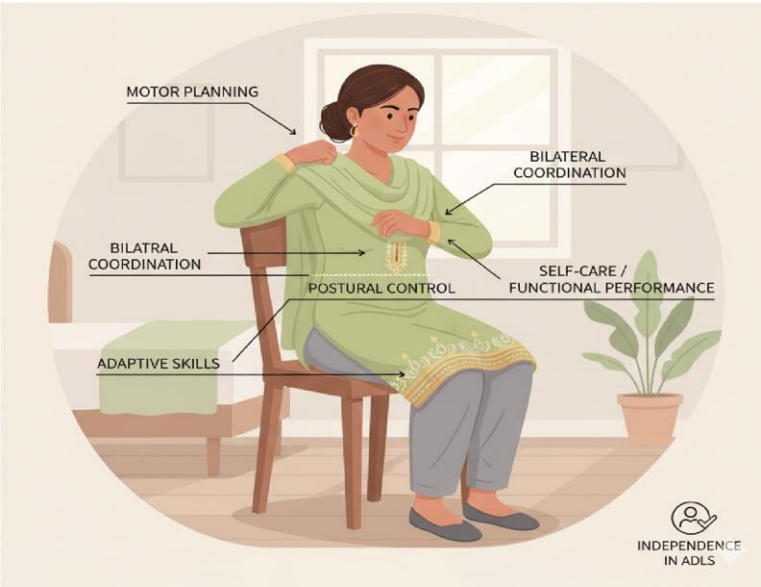
- Personal Upper Body Dressing
- Assisted / Dependent Upper Body Dressing

Personal Upper Body Dressing

This type of dressing is performed independently by the female as part of her daily self-care routine. It includes wearing and removing upper body clothes such as shirts, tops, blouses, dupattas, scarves, or jackets without help from others.

Assisted / Dependent Upper Body Dressing

This type of dressing is performed with partial or full assistance from a caregiver or therapist. It is required when a female has physical, sensory, cognitive, or coordination difficulties that make independent dressing challenging.



BASIC SCIENCE OF UPPER BODY DRESSING
ANATOMICAL PERSPECTIVE OF UPPER BODY GARMENTS

The way women's upper-body clothes fit comes down to anatomy. Women generally have narrower shoulders, a fuller chest, and natural curves in their torso. These differences affect how shirts , blouses, jackets and traditional clothes like kurtas and kameez fit.

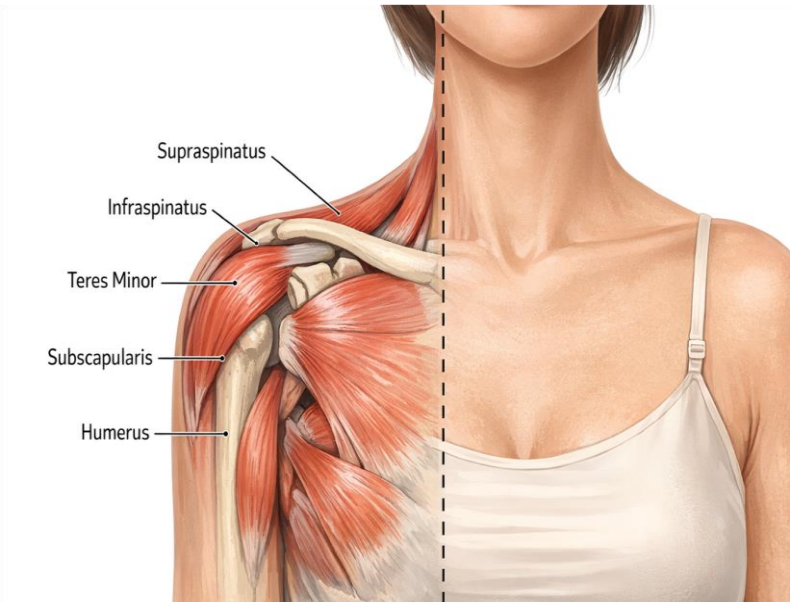
Women's clothes are often designed with features like stretchy fabrics, elastic waistbands, darts, or adjustable closures. These help the clothing fit easily around the chest, shoulders, and waist, and allow easy arm and shoulder movement. Since women's torsos and busts vary in shape and size, these design elements are essential for an appropriate outfit.

If clothes don't fit properly, they can be uncomfortable and even influence how a woman moves or stands. Ill fitting clothes create unnecessary hindrance in movement ,it spoils the posture, limit arm movement and affect the daily life activities by making them difficult to complete. For women with mobility issues or physical challenges , poor fitted clothes create even bigger problems. Effectively designed upper body clothing not only supports comfort and ease but also improves the confidence and independence of women by letting them feel comfortable , free and incredible about themselves.

ANATOMICAL FEATURES THAT ARE INVOLVED IN FEMALES

Joints Involved (Upper Body Dressing in Female)

Body Part	Joint Name	Movement/ Function During Dressing
Shoulder Griddle	Shoulder Joint	Flexion, abduction, and rotation to insert arms into sleeves.
Elbow	Elbow Joint	Flexion and extension while pulling garments on/off.
Forearm	Radioulnar Joints	Supination and pronation for sleeve adjustment.
Wrist	Wrist Joint	Flexion, extension, and positioning for grasping fabric.
Hand	Finger Joints	Fine motor control for buttons, hooks, zippers.
Trunk	Spine	Flexion and rotation to adjust garments and reach behind.



Muscles Involved

Upper Limb and Trunk Muscles (Female Upper Body Dressing)

Body Region	Muscle Name	Primary Action/Function
Shoulder	Deltoid	Lifting the arm into sleeves.
	Rotator Cuff Muscles	Shoulder stability during movement.
Chest	Pectoralis Major	Pulling garments across the body.
Upper Arm	Biceps Brachii	Elbow flexion while dressing.
	Triceps Brachii	Elbow extension during adjustments.
Forearm	Flexor Muscles	Grasping fabric.
	Extensor Muscles	Releasing grip.
Hand	Thenar Muscles	Buttoning in fastening.
	Interossei and Lumbricals	Find adjustments and precision grip.
Trunk	Core Muscles	Postural stability during dressing.

Nerve Supply

Upper Limb Nerves Involved in Dressing

Body Region	Nerve Name	Functional Role in Dressing
Shoulder and Arm	Axillary Neve	Shoulder Movement.
Upper Limb	Musculocutaneous Nerve	Elbow Flexion.
Forearm and Hand	Median Nerve	Fine motor control (buttons, zips).
Hand	Ulnar Nerve	Finger coordination.
Wrist and Hand	Radial Nerve	Wrist extension and grip stability.

Sensory Components

- Movement sense : Being aware of how the arm and shoulder move and where they are .
- Touch : Feeling the material and understanding how the clothes fit on the body .
- Pressure : Changing how tight or loose the clothes are to stay comfortable.
- Vision : Using sight to help guide the hands while getting dressed.

Hand Function in Upper Body Dressing

Hands assist by:

- Holding fabric
- Pulling tops over shoulder
- Adjusting sleeves and Neckline
- Buttoning, zipping, hooking

Types of Grips used:

- Power Grip: Pulling garments
- Precision Grip: Buttons, hooks, zippers
- Lateral Grip: Holding thin fabric edges

Female-Specific Anatomical Consideration

Aspect	**Female Upper Body Dressing.**
Shoulder Mobility	Greater flexibility required.
Fine Motor Skills	Higher demand due to fastening.
Garment Types	Blouses, shirts, dupatta, bras, camisoles.
Postural Control	Core stability is important.
Additional Factors	Bust support garments increase complexity.

PHYSIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE OF UPPER BODY GARMENTS

Physiology is all about how our bodies work and maintain balance, and clothing plays an important role in physiology by acting as a layer between the body and the environment. Upper-body garments—like blouses, shirts, jackets, bras, and kurtas—link with the chest, shoulders, and back, affecting circulation, posture, temperature, and even motor function.

Blood Flow & Comfort

Tops or bras that are too tight can compress blood vessels around the shoulders, chest, or under the axilla. This may cause discomfort, fatigue, or even swelling if worn for a long time. Well-fitted clothes allow good blood flow and stop uncomfortable pressure areas, this helps movement feel easier and reduces effort.

Temperature Regulation

The upper area of our body produces a lot of heat, mainly around the chest and back. Breathable fabrics like cotton or moisture wicking materials keep you cool, reduce excessive sweating, and lower the risk of skin irritation. Tight or non-breathable clothing can lock in heat and moisture, which may cause rashes, irritation, chafing, or fungal/skin infections especially for women who move less or wear layered outfits.

Posture & Muscle Support

Upper-body clothing can also influence posture and muscle activity. Heavy jackets, tight tops, or poorly designed bras may affect shoulder alignment, back posture, and arm mobility. Appropriate clothing supports natural posture and allows smooth movements of arms and shoulders during dressing or daily activities.

System and Components	Functions/Actions
Musculoskeletal System	**Movement and Stability**
Joints (shoulder, elbow, wrist)	Flexion, extension, abduction, rotation for wearing tops.
Major Muscles	Deltoid, rotator cuff, biceps, triceps, forearm and hand muscles.
Nervous System	**Planning and Execution**
Brain (cortex, cerebellum)	Voluntary movement, coordination and smooth control.
Peripheral Nerves	Arm movement control and sensory feedback.
Sensory System	**Accuracy and safety**
Proprioception	Knowing arm and hand position.
Tactile and Visual	Feeling the fabric and guiding hands visually.

PHYSIOLOGICAL ASPECTS

Phases of Upper Body Dressing (Females)

Pre-dressing Phase

- First, the female checks her sitting or standing balance.
- Proper trunk and shoulder control is prepared.
- The brain plans the sequence of movements needed for dressing.

Dressing Phase

- Shoulder flexion and abduction occur to insert arms into sleeves.
- Elbow flexion helps guide the arm through the garment.
- Upper limbs work together to pull the garment over the shoulders or head.

Adjustment Phase

- Shoulder and trunk movements help adjust the garment properly.
- Fine motor control is required for:
- Buttoning
- Zipping
- Hooking
- The joint of the hand and finger cooperation is tested during this movement.

Dressing completion Phase

- Posture is checked again to stay balanced and comfortable.
- Final adjustments are made for satisfaction and appearance.
- The females make sure that they feel their dresses comfortable and relaxed.

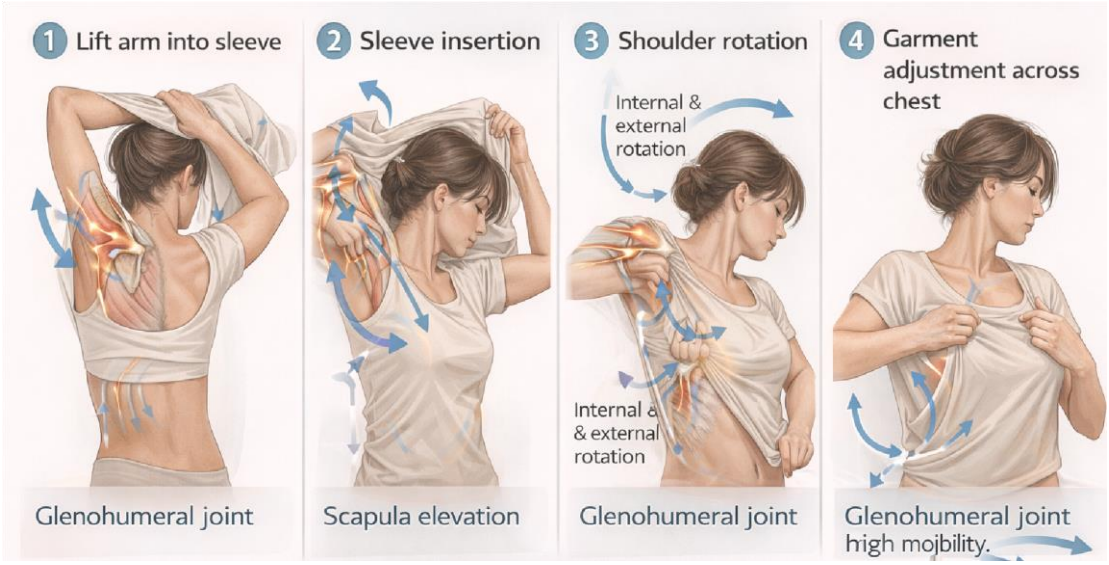
Female Physiological Consideration in Upper Body Dressing

Aspect	Female
Garment Structure	Blouses, shirts, kurtis, dupatta, cap, bras.
Shoulder Movement	Greater shoulder flexion and abduction.
Fine Motor Demand	High (buttons, zippers, hooks).
Balance Preference	Sitting is often preferred.
Muscle demand	Shoulder stabilizers, core and hand muscles.

KINESIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE OF UPPER BODY GARMENTS

Kinesiology is the study of how the human body moves and how those movements happen. Putting on upper-body dressing like blouses, shirts, jackets, bras, or kurtas depends a lot on the coordinated movements of the shoulder, elbow, wrist, and trunk. How these joints and muscles work together affects posture, balance, and how easily we move. If clothes are too tight or poorly designed, they can restrict movement and make dressing harder and more tiring.

Women have unique body shapes and need to move a lot. For example, narrower shoulders, a fuller chest, and different torso length can change how the arm moves while dressing. so, upper body dressing should be designed to allow easy arm movement, rotation and fine hand control, while still being comfortable and supporting good posture.



KINESIOLOGICAL ASPECTS INVOLVED IN FEMALE

Joint Movement

Joint Name	Action and Purpose during Dressing
Shoulder Joint	Flexion: Lifting arms to put on shirt/dupatta. Abduction: Moving arms sideways into sleeves. External/Internal Rotation: Adjusting sleeves, fastening hooks.
Elbow Joint	Flexion: Bringing hand toward face/body. Extension: straightening arm into sleeves.
Wrist Joint	Flexion/Extension: Passing hands through sleeves.
Forearm (Radioulnar)	Supination/Pronation: Adjusting cuffs, angles, buttons.
Trunk	Flexion: Bending forward to pull the garment down. Rotation: Adjusting back side of blouse/shirt.
Neck	Flexion/Extension: Wearing scarves, dupatta necklace.

Muscle Action

Function of different muscles in different ways during dressing activity:

- Concentric contractions: This happens when muscles pull and shorten. For example, lifting your arms up or moving them across the chest.
- Eccentric contractions: This happens when muscles stretch while still working. example, slowly lowering arms or controlling your movement while bending.
- Isometric contractions: Core and back muscles retain the trunk steady while outstretching or fastening garments; shoulder stabilizers hold arms in position.

Postural Controls and Base of Support

Dressing affects how we balance our bodies:

- Sitting: Gives a wider base of support; easier for adjusting bras, extra fitted tops, or superimposed clothing.
- Standing: Requires more trunk and muscular control of the shoulder; used when reaching over the head or wearing jackets.
- Center of gravity: Shifts as arms lift or spin around, requiring core and back muscles to sustain balance and stability.

Female-Specific Kinesiological Consideration

Features	**Female upper Body Dressing**
Primary Movements	Shoulder abduction, flexion, fine hand movements.
Postural Habit	Mostly sitting for stability.
Balance Requirement	Moderate, especially while standing.
Garment Impact	Tight sleeves, blouses, hooks require precision.
Coordination	High hand-eye and bilateral coordination.

Common Movement Challenges (Kinesiology View)

Difficulties in upper body dressing may happen due to:

- Limited shoulder mobility
- Neck or upper back stiffness
- Poor hand collaboration (buttons, hooks)
- Weak core or shoulder stabilizers
- Pain because of rotator cuff or cervical issues

These movement problems directly influence dressing performance.

Why It Matters in Kinesiology?

In kinesiology, upper body dressing assists us understand:

- Functional joint mobility
- Effective postural control
- Fine motor coordination
- Balance strategies
- Muscle strength and endurance

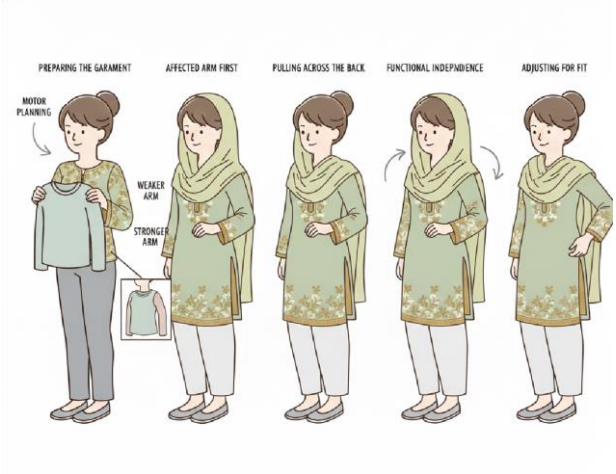
That's why therapists examine dressing movements to identify biomechanical limitations and improve functional independence.

SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE OF UPPER BODY GARMENTS

Clothing is not just about covering the body—it's also a way society notices, observes and defines us. Upper-body garments, like tops, blouses, jackets, and bras, reflect culture, social status, and individuality. Historically, women wore blouses, corsets, or fitted tops, while men wore shirts, jackets, and vests. These distinctions throwback social expectations, work roles, and ideas of power or self-effacement.

Today, what women put on their upper body still depends heavily on culture, religion, and social norms. In many societies, modesty is emphasized through loose tops, kurtas, or long-sleeved clothing. Most workplaces often have uniforms that indicate authority, position, or professionalism. Outside of work, upper-body clothing is more about personal expressions.

Even though gender norms are evolving, social expectations still influence how women's upper-body clothing is plotted and marketed. Occupational therapists usually see how these social rules can limit participation, especially for women with disabilities who may need adaptive clothing. Making garments that are functional but still socially allowable helps women participate fully in daily life.



OCCUPATIONAL PERSPECTIVE OF FEMALE UPPER BODY GARMENTS

Occupational therapy uses well designed clothes as a vital role to give women their independence, dignity and eventually their happiness. Upper body garments should help women to assist or help women in dressing easily by providing comfort and relief. Well-designed garments aid mobility and movement of women with medical conditions or physical challenges.

The features of assistive designs

- Soft, stretchy fabrics that let your arm move freely and comfortably.
- Hook-and-loop (Velcro) or self-fasteners for bras, jackets, or tops.
- Open-back or side-opening tops for people with finite shoulder mobility.
- Garments that do not require complex fine motor skills, such as wide-neck blouses.

Women with physical limitations often scuffle with tight or poorly designed clothing, which can limit arm movement, cause discomfort, or make dressing frustrating. Occupational therapists evaluate how garments fit, how movements are carried out, and whether adaptive clothing or methodology can improve independence.

The goal is to design clothing that not only supports mobility and function but also allows women to feel confident, stylish, and like themselves. Adaptive upper-body garments can enhance self-confidence, improve participation in daily activities, and increase overall quality of life.

CASE EXAMPLE

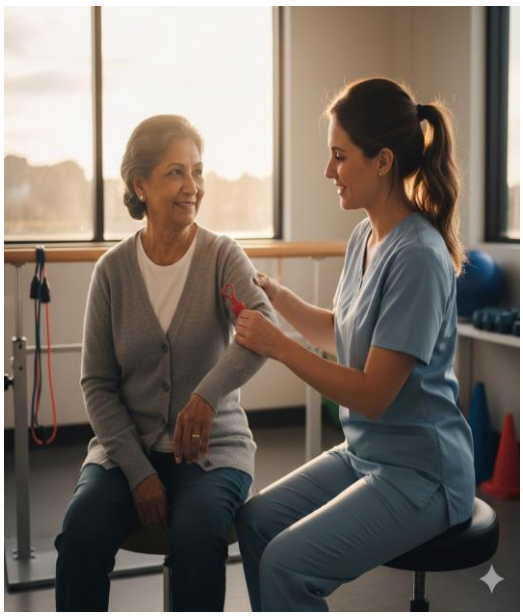
Mrs. A is a 60-year-old woman. She recently faced a stroke which affected her right arm and made it very difficult for her to use her arm and hand. She couldn't lift her arm, everyday tasks like putting on clothes, T-shirts, jackets, zippers and fitted sleeves became very hard and made her frustrated and dependent on others. Her occupational therapist examined her and suggested her different adaptive upper body clothing

- shirts with Velcro or magnetic closures
- stretchy and lightweight fabrics for the easy movement and functioning of arm
- wide and broad necklines or side openings so that the movement of arm can be reduced

These adaptations can help Mrs. A dress herself properly without relying on anyone.

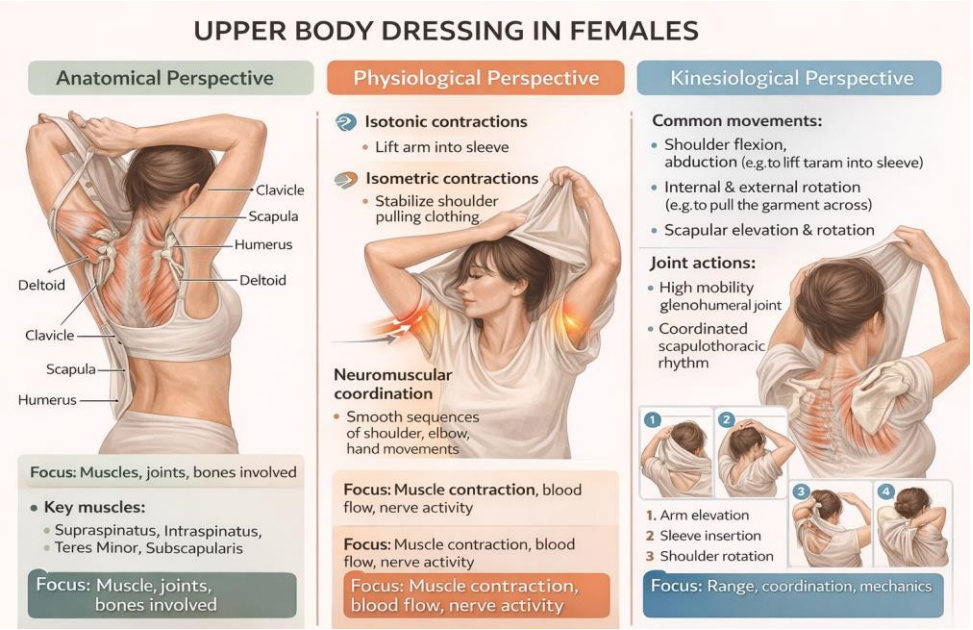
She can put on her shirts, jackets and fasten garments with less effort. This is a small change but made a big impact as she feels more confident, independent and comfortable and is ready to participate in her daily activities.

This complete case shows how occupational therapy and adaptive ways can revive independence, improves self-esteem and it makes everyday activities like dressing etc manageable and empowers women after facing several physical challenges.



CONCLUSION

The upper body attire for women is much more than just looking good or appealing. Clothing garments especially front open blouses, tops, shirts and jackets tend to allow free arm and shoulder mobility and movements, which feels less difficult to wear. Considering both rehabilitation and routine life, what occupational therapists do is, help figure out challenges concerning mobility and clothing issues. Along with suggesting potential solutions and providing therapy to overcome them. Minor but vital changes such as soft and stretchy fabrics, different openings in garments can make dressing much simpler and easier. Better designed upper body clothing can help support various factors such as independence, building confidence and encouraging women to move freely and perform their rudimentary day to day tasks with greater comfort and ease.



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