

Treatment and Management of Dystonia

There is currently no cure for dystonia, but a range of treatments and rehabilitation strategies can help manage symptoms, reduce discomfort, and improve quality of life. The most effective approach usually combines medical treatment with physical management and tailored support.

Medical Management

Your neurologist may recommend one or more of the following options depending on the type and severity of your dystonia:

- **Botulinum toxin (Botox) injections** – Used to relax overactive muscles in focal dystonia. These are typically repeated every 10–12 weeks.
- **Oral medications** – May include levodopa (especially in dopa-responsive dystonia), muscle relaxants, anticholinergics, or benzodiazepines.
- **Deep Brain Stimulation (DBS)** – A surgical option for some individuals with generalised or severe focal dystonia who do not respond well to other treatments.
- **Other interventions** – In some cases, therapies such as intrathecal baclofen, transcranial magnetic stimulation (TMS), or sensory retraining tools may be explored.

Physical and Functional Management

Alongside medical input, physiotherapy and occupational therapy can play a key role in managing dystonia. This includes:

- **Movement retraining** – Helping you relearn more functional movement patterns by targeting postural control, coordination, and stability.
- **Sensory-motor retraining** – Using strategies such as constraint-based therapy, mirror feedback, or altering sensory input to help 're-map' affected areas in the brain.
- **Task-specific rehab** – For people with focal hand or occupational dystonia, therapy may focus on reintroducing specific activities using adapted strategies.
- **Strength and endurance training** – Gentle, graded strengthening and aerobic activity to support general health and movement confidence.
- **Splinting or orthotics** – To support alignment or reduce abnormal posturing in certain cases.
- **Postural and biomechanical support** – Addressing contributing factors such as scapular stability, joint positioning, or compensation patterns.

At cann, we consider both the physical and emotional impact of dystonia and aim to equip you with practical tools and approaches that improve your confidence and everyday function.

Disclaimer

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