Special consideration needs to be taken when designing apparel for a person who is wheelchair-bound. Range of motion, dressing capabilities, and body proportions are just some of the things a designer should be thinking about when creating adaptable clothing. Garments for people with limited physical mobility that are both fashionable and functional are few and far between. Especially when it comes to an aging market of women 55+, their options in the apparel category range from hospital gowns to sweatpants. My goal for this design was an elegant, timeless piece that is comfortable and easy to wear. I want the wearer to feel stylish and confident without the discomfort of a garment intended for a different body type. I chose a sophisticated color story and a silhouette that steers clear of temporary trends to create a garment that is chic and wearable.

This top is made with ease and comfort in mind. I have chosen a 100% polyester double-knit for comfort and easy cleaning. Often individuals in this target market struggle to dress due to restricted arm mobility. This piece has extra functional ease through the back and shoulders so it can be slipped on easily without shoulder strain and allows for movement if she is wheeling herself. The sleeves are slightly cropped so to avoid snagging or rubbing on her chair's wheels. The panel draped across the front is fully removable with magnetic closures hidden inside the front facings. This detail can help to combat complications from conditions like arthritis or Parkinson's that make it difficult to use traditional closures. On the back of the sweater you'll find a higher cut to avoid uncomfortable bunching while seated.

I have created a pair of pants to accompany the designed jacket. These pants are made out of a comfortable stretch fabric that moves with the body. A flexible material such as LYCRA Soft Comfort Technology allows space to conceal any necessary medical devices. I have designed them with only short side seams to avoid irritating rubbing on the leg. The pant rise much higher than the front to better fit the seated body, so the leg length is shorter. The waistband is flexible and soft, so it fits the body comfortably and stays put. The pants are lightweight, easy to move in, and have extra leg room for added comfort and ease. The rise is also higher to prevent the pants from slipping down while seated. The fabric is also very soft and comfortable, making it easy to wear all day long.

Winter 2018 - Adaptable Clothing for Women 55+