

# Energy Conservation Tips

We all get worn out sometimes. But fatigue secondary to disability or aging can really interfere with the ability to function independently. If you find that fatigue is keeping you from doing things you want to do in your life, energy conservation techniques may help you. Energy conservation means looking at your daily routines to find ways to reduce the amount of effort needed to perform certain tasks, eliminating other tasks, and building more rest throughout the day. Keep in mind that not every technique will work for you. These are suggestions you can use and adapt to find the right fit for you. Remember: Energy is like money – you've only got so much, so think about what you're spending it on!

## Rearrange Your Environment

- ❖ Keep frequently used items in easily accessible places.
- ❖ Replace existing heavy items with lighter ones; for example, use plastic plates and cups rather than china and glass.
- ❖ Install long handles on faucets and doorknobs.
- ❖ Adjust work spaces, such as raising a tabletop, to eliminate awkward positions; bad posture drains energy.
- ❖ Install pull-out or swing-out shelving in cabinets.
- ❖ Wear an apron with pockets to carry around cooking utensils or cleaning tools.
- ❖ Consider moving your bed to the first floor to eliminate stair climbing.

## Eliminate Unnecessary Effort

- ❖ Sit rather than stand whenever possible: while preparing meals, washing dishes, ironing, etc.
- ❖ Use adaptive equipment to make tasks easier; try a jar opener, a reacher, a shower chair to allow you to sit while bathing, or a hands-free headset for your phone.
- ❖ Soak your dishes before washing, then let them air dry; or use paper plates and napkins.
- ❖ Use prepared foods when possible.
- ❖ Get a rolling cart to transport things around the house, rather than carry them.
- ❖ See if your grocery store will deliver your groceries.
- ❖ Use store-provided wheelchairs or scooters when you shop.

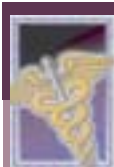
## Plan Ahead

- ❖ Gather all the supplies you need for a task or project before starting, so everything is in one place.
- ❖ Call ahead to stores to make sure the items you need are available.
- ❖ Cook in larger quantities and refrigerate or freeze extra portions for later.
- ❖ Work rest breaks into activities as often as possible. Take a break before you get tired.
- ❖ Schedule enough time for activities – rushing takes more energy.
- ❖ Try keeping a daily activity journal for a few weeks to identify times of day or certain tasks that result in more fatigue.

## Prioritize

- ❖ Eliminate or reduce tasks that aren't that important to you.
- ❖ Delegate tasks to friends or family members who offer help.
- ❖ Consider hiring professionals, such as a cleaning or lawn care service, to cut down your workload.

Adapted from: <http://www.phcentral.org/medical/conservation.html> and [http://www.otworks.ca/otworks\\_page.asp?pageID=689](http://www.otworks.ca/otworks_page.asp?pageID=689)



## Notes

The purpose of this patient education handout is to further explain or remind you about a medical condition. This handout is a general guide only. If you have specific questions, be sure to discuss them with your health care provider. This handout may be reproduced for distribution to patients.